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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Making plans

Inspiring ideas for the year ahead

HOW TO START A
micro nursery

Tom Stuart-Smith's
iconic design for
Hepworth Wakefield

James Basson's
fresh take on tradition
in Provence

THE BEST BIENNIALS
to grow
from seed

10 favourite
EARLY FLOWERING PLANTS

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More than just a greenhouse

Editor's letter

Tom Stuart-Smith's iconic design for The Hepworth Wakefield draws inspiration from its setting between 19th-century red brick mills and an angular, 21st-century art gallery. On the edge of the raging River Calder, the garden echoes the striking, trapezoidal form of the gallery, yet reflects Barbara Hepworth's deep connection to the landscape.

The planting has been chosen to evolve throughout the year – Tom notes that "attachment to nature and place is stronger with variety" and has provenance, from the tulips selected for spring; Wakefield is home to the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, one of the oldest extant English florists' societies, to perennials in high summer. On page 34 Alys Fowler explores how the seasons shift and change in this new and remarkable garden.

In a new series, plantsman Jimi Blake chooses his ten favourite plants for the start of the year from his beautiful and adventurous garden, Hunting Brook in County Wicklow. Notable this month are a nodding yellow cardamine and a deliciously fragrant daphne, which both flower early and at the same time as snowdrops.

Looking ahead, head gardener Troy Scott Smith highlights his must-grow biennials for sowing this summer. The contribution shorter-lived plants can make to the garden is considerable and there is a definite shift among gardeners towards using them, and a wide and exciting range of seeds available.

In this issue we also highlight the best kit for those new to gardening and flag up our favourite virtual gardening courses for those of us keen to expand our knowledge.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

Epimedium 'Black Sea', one of Jimi Blake's choices for his new series, page 22.

JASON INGRAM

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FEBRUARY 2021

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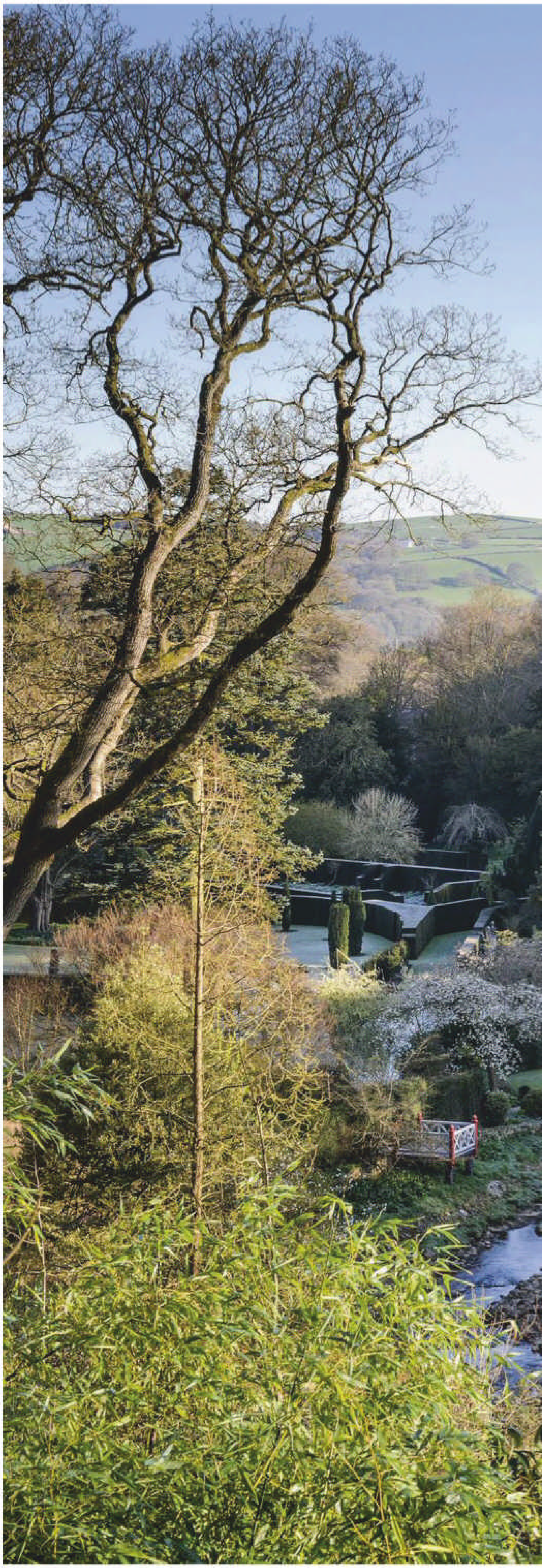

JASON INGRAM

Gresgarth Hall in Lancashire, designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd's beautiful lakeside garden, page 44.

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COVER IMAGE

The Hepworth Wakefield Garden by Jason Ingram

ON THE COVER

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- Travel with Japanese garden expert Hannah Gardner to discover some of Japan's hidden garden gems – page 10
- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 28
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† Competition open to UK residents only.

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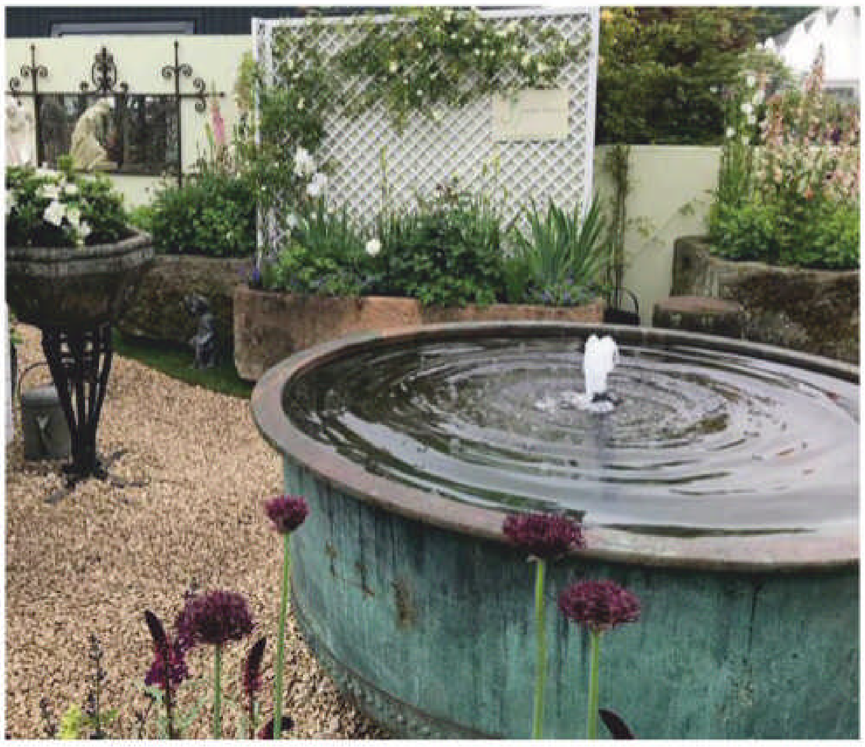

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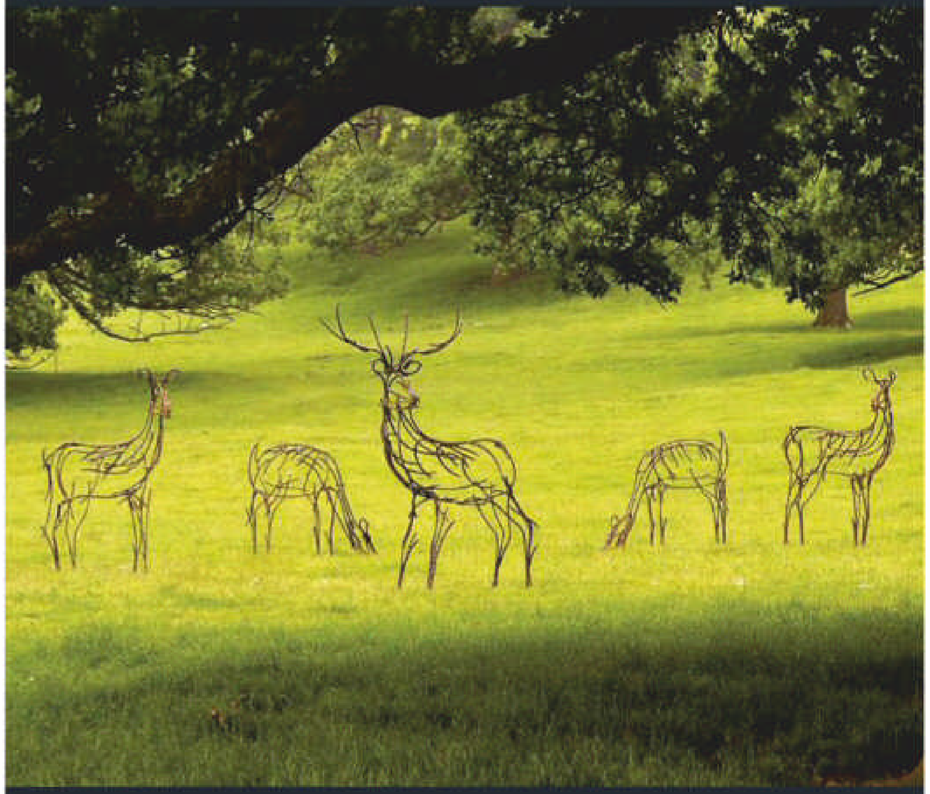

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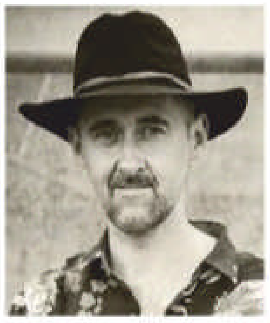

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

RACHEL WARNE

Jimi Blake
Jimi begins a new plantsperson's column, page 22. *"I've included a selection of some of my favourite plants, a mix of British natives alongside non-native performers and adaptable species."*

Troy Scott Smith
Troy suggests the best biennials to grow from seed, page 64. *"Spring and early summer just wouldn't be the same without a few biennials to add colour, scent and magic."*

Alister Thorpe
Alister photographs a small, Stefano Marinaz-designed garden, page 70. *"There's an ethereal quality to this design that emanates from Stefano's planting. I left full of ideas."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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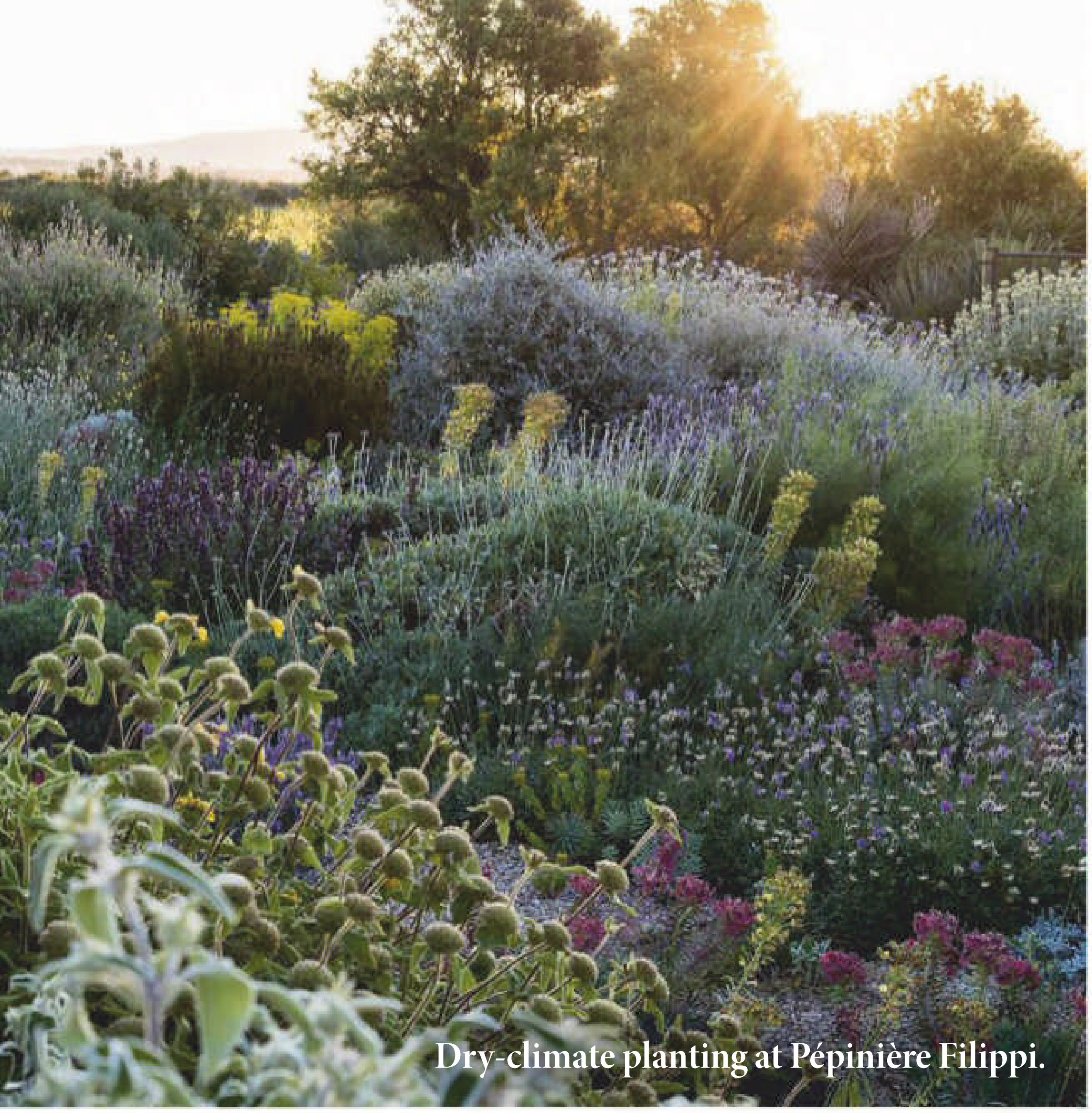
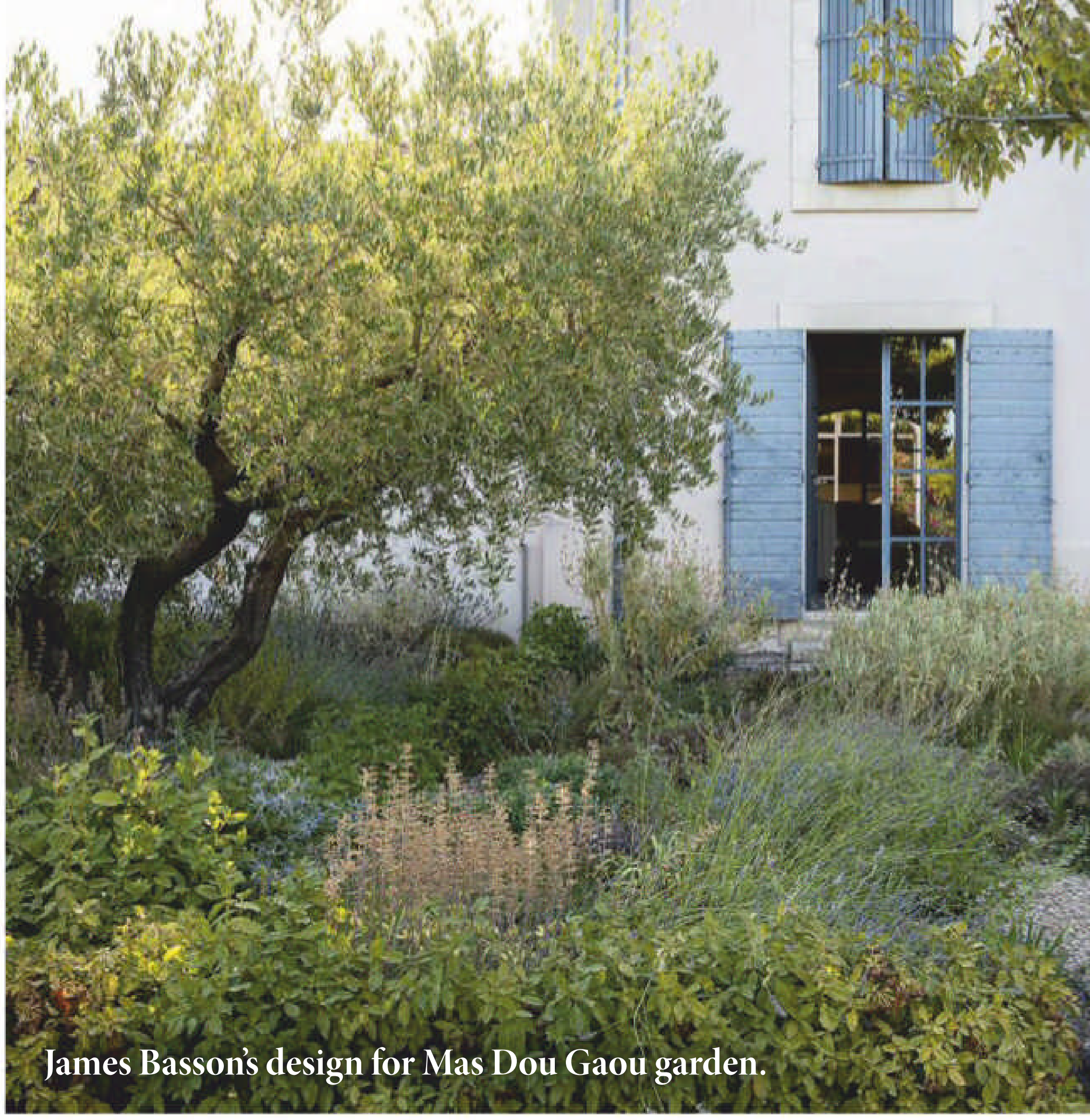
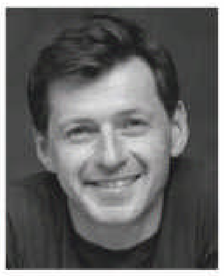

Dry-climate planting at Pépinière Filippi.


James Basson's design for Mas Dou Gaou garden.

24-28 JUNE 2021

PRIVATE GARDENS OF PROVENCE

Join experts James and Helen Basson to discover a new approach to gardening in a Mediterranean climate


GUEST HOST

James Basson lives in the south of France where he and his wife Helen run award-winning Scape Design.

TOUR LEADER

Kirsty Fergusson trained at Capel Manor. She is now a garden writer living in France.

The region of Provence, in southeast France, with its long, hot and dry summers provides a wonderful opportunity to learn how to design and plant gardens adapted to such conditions. The landscape remains essentially unchanged: medieval hill towns rise among olive groves and vineyards, and fields of lavender and sunflowers soak up the sunshine. Dusty roads fringed with pines give way to banks of wild cistus, rosemary and thyme. Hidden behind old iron gates or an avenue of ancient plane trees, old country estates have been elegantly rejuvenated in recent years by contemporary designers, creating sensuous gardens, each in its own way responding to the spirit of place and the designer's eye. Designers James and Helen Basson show us two of their recent projects for private gardens and introduce us to the legendary **Pépinière Filippi** nursery near Montpellier, where Olivier Filippi's experimental techniques in dry gardening have transformed our understanding of Mediterranean gardening practice. Other highlights include the garden designer Dominique Lafourcade's home **La Pomone**, in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, and **Le Terrain**, the garden of artist-tree surgeon extraordinaire, Marc Nucera. Our hotel for the stay is the 5-star Hotel d'Europe, in the historic heart of Avignon.

BOOKING DETAILS

The price per person, based on two people sharing is £3,890 (a single supplement of £490 is levied by the hotel).

The price includes: four nights bed & breakfast at Hotel d'Europe; three evening meals and four lunches, all with local wines; and return flights to Marseille with British Airways. Those wishing to make their own travel arrangements should state this on the booking form and we will deduct £143 per person from the tour price. The price does not include extras or travel insurance.

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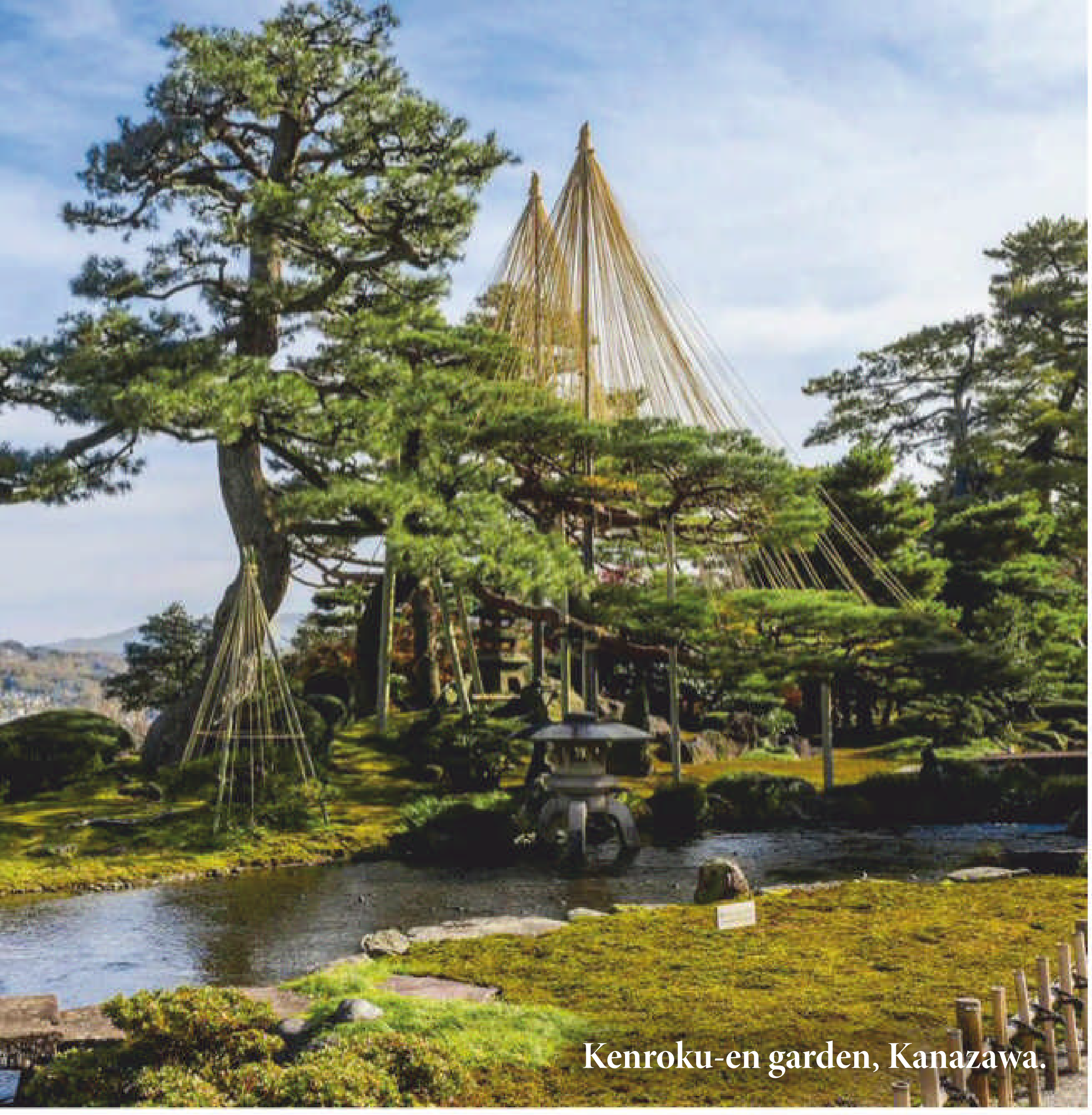
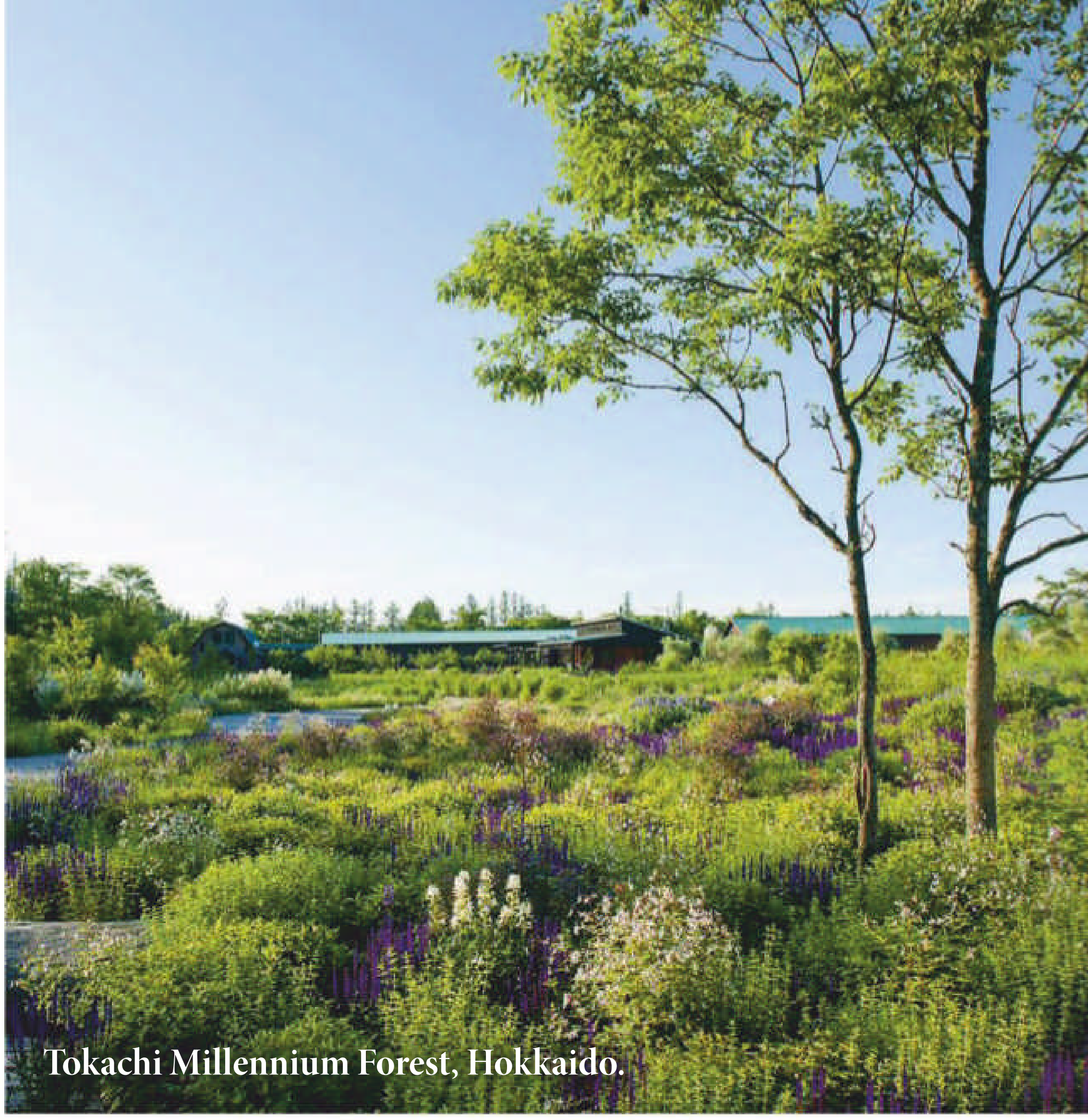

Kenroku-en garden, Kanazawa.


Tokachi Millennium Forest, Hokkaido.

16-30 SEPTEMBER 2021

JAPAN'S HIDDEN GARDEN GEMS

Travel with Japanese garden expert Hannah Gardner on this far-reaching, two-week itinerary and discover some of Japan's most compelling gardens

TOUR LEADER

Hannah Gardner Kew-trained horticulturist, Hannah works as a head gardener and garden consultant, with a particular passion for studying plant communities worldwide – including time she spent in Japan.

The tour starts with a visit to the internationally celebrated contemporary gardens of **Tokachi Millennium Forest**, designed by Dan Pearson and situated on Japan's most northerly island, Hokkaido. You'll learn about the spirit of nature and sense of place from head gardener and international speaker Midori Shintani, as well as enjoying a cultural workshop and foraged forest lunch prepared by the gardeners. We'll also study the stunning autumn flora of the nearby mountains. Then we transfer to Honshu, Japan's mainland, to delve into the traditional gardens, culture and the unforgettable architecture of Tokyo, Kanazawa, Kyoto and Nara, where gardens will provoke thought and delight in equal measure. Meet with the gardeners of the **Chion-in Temple** who will demonstrate the fine art of *niwaki* pruning and offer advice on the tools they use. Discover both renowned gardens and lesser-known, hidden cultural gems, such as the beautifully preserved, historic **Sumiya Pleasure House** in Kyoto. The varied landscapes we will visit meld the intimate essence of nature with the disciplines of cosmology, poetry and meditation and through Hannah's formal and informal instruction, your journey will unpick the complexity and seek to understand the history and meaning of these serene and spiritual landscapes.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £6,280 (a single supplement of £1,140 is levied by the hotels).

Price is based on all hotels, trains, other transportation, most meals and all sightseeing. It does not include hotel extras or travel insurance, or international flights, although these can be arranged through Distant Horizons if required. For more details and for an in-depth itinerary with details of day-to-day visits, meals, etc, please contact Distant Horizons.

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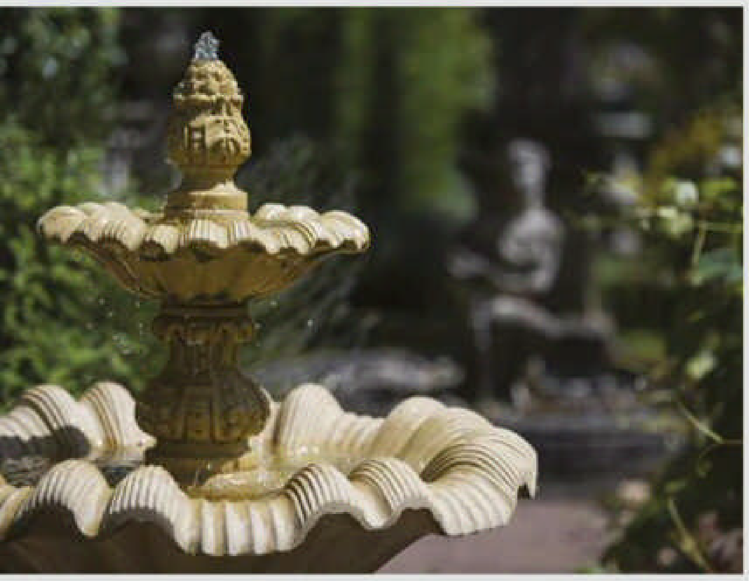

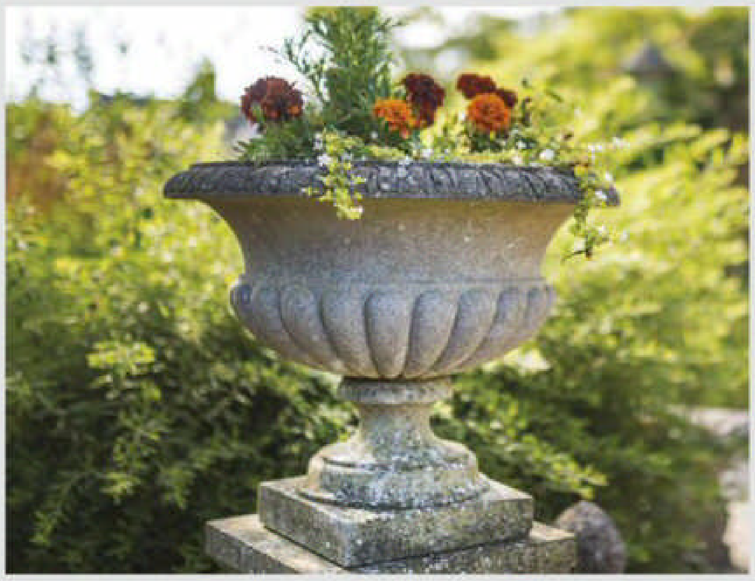

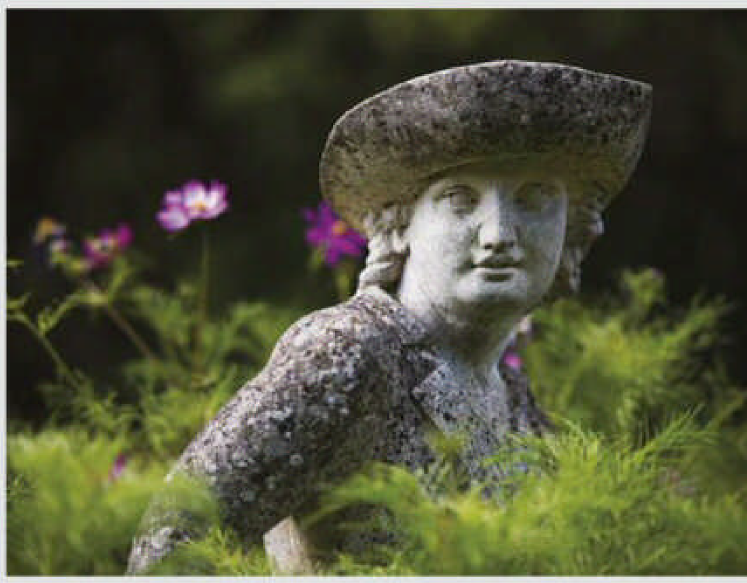

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Dig in

What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month

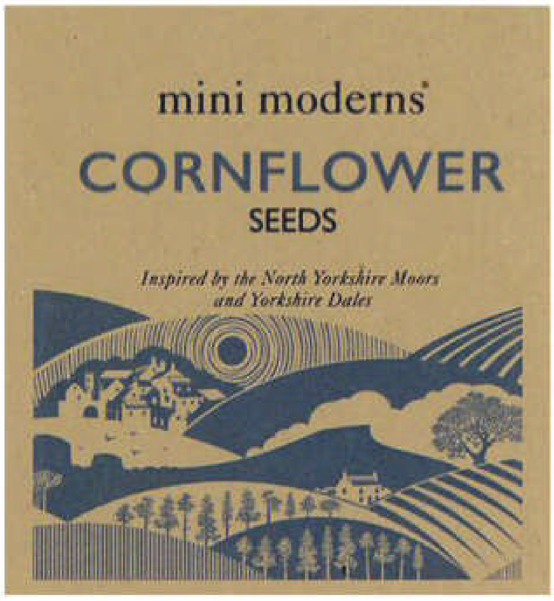
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JONK, *THEATER, ABKHAZIA REGION OF GEORGIA*, ABKHAZIA; RUAN KEZHUANG, *FINGERPRINTS OF THE EARTH*; ROBERTO BUENO, *TOXIC SAP*; YU QIYONG, *WETLAND IN WINTER*

The world's a stage

The international photography competition, Earth Photo, has announced its 2020 winners. The competition, which is created by Forestry England and the Royal Geographical Society, showcases the very best in nature, environmental and geographical photography. After receiving more than 2,600 entries, judges awarded the overall winning prize to photographer Jonk, for a series of four photographs, including *Theater, Abkhazia region of Georgia* (main image above) that showcase buildings abandoned by civilisation and re-conquered by nature, and which aim to awaken our ecological consciousness. Runners up included (above from left), *Wetland in Winter* by Yu Qiyong, taken in Shandong Province, China; *Toxic Sap* by Roberto Bueno, taken in Spain; and *Fingerprints of the Earth* by Ruan Kezhuang, taken in Fujian Province, China. You can view all of the spectacular shortlisted and winning photographs via an online exhibition at **rgs.org/geography/earth-photo-2020**

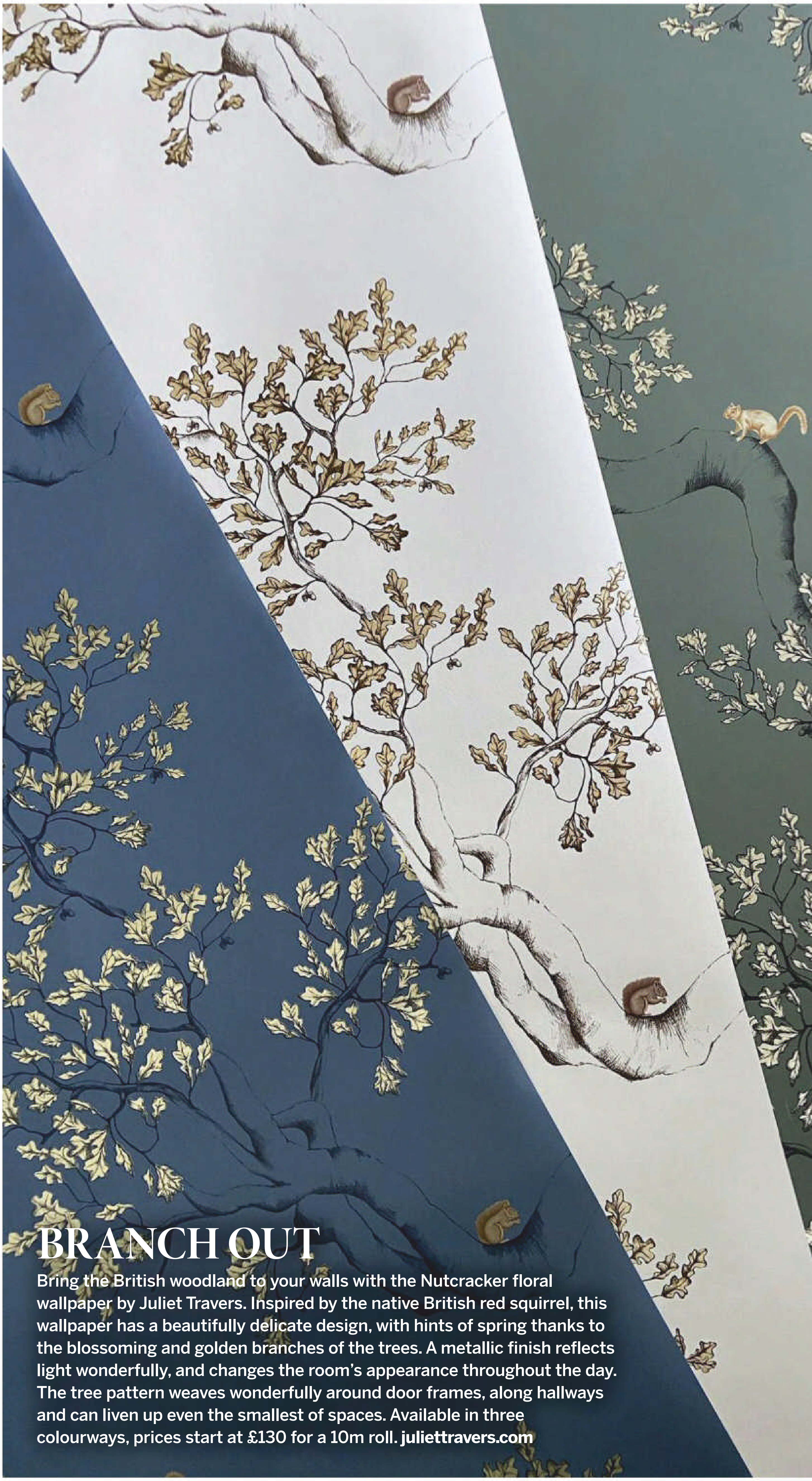
News

COMPILED BY KATIE DUTTON



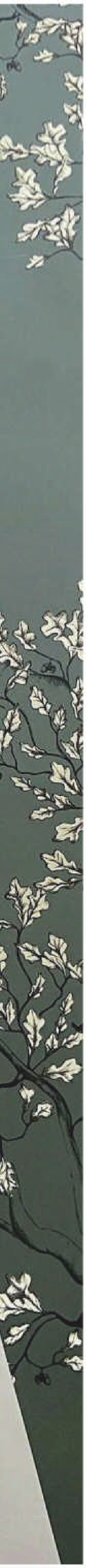
Northern roots

British design brand Mini Moderns has released a new range of seeds inspired by the wildflowers of the North Yorkshire Moors and Yorkshire Dales. The Moordale seed collection follows on from the success of Mini Modern's first seed range, which was inspired by the dramatic landscape of Dungeness in Kent. Brand founders Keith Stephenson and Mark Hampshire decided to go back to their roots for their second range; both were brought up in Yorkshire and can vividly recall the plants and scents of the countryside there. Ten seed varieties make up the collection; Cornflower, Wild Marjoram, Thrift, Bell Heather, Water Avens, Bluebells, Fox and Cubs, Wild Garlic, Honesty and Cotton Grass – all native to the Yorkshire landscape. Each seed packet costs £2.50 from ***minimoderns.com***



BRANCH OUT

Bring the British woodland to your walls with the Nutcracker floral wallpaper by Juliet Travers. Inspired by the native British red squirrel, this wallpaper has a beautifully delicate design, with hints of spring thanks to the blossoming and golden branches of the trees. A metallic finish reflects light wonderfully, and changes the room's appearance throughout the day. The tree pattern weaves wonderfully around door frames, along hallways and can liven up even the smallest of spaces. Available in three colourways, prices start at £130 for a 10m roll. **juliettravers.com**



All-rounder

Dutch toolmaker Sneeboer is well known for its innovative, yet classically designed tools, and its new pottery/container knife is no exception. A finalist for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show's Garden Product of the Year 2020, the knife has been specifically designed to help loosen plants and shrubs from their containers while repotting. The long, flat, sharpened and flexible stainless-steel knife will easily slide around pots to help release the soil and plant in one go, while the square sharp end will cut through any roots that are stuck within. An ergonomic handle made from red beech keeps things comfortable too. The knife costs £76.15 from **sneeboer.co.uk**

COTSWOLD POSY PATCH

A blooming career

Flowers from the Farm, the not-for-profit co-operative that supports cut flower farmers, has awarded five new Diversity Scholarships, for black, indigenous or people of colour hoping to start a career in flower farming. Launched at the end of last year, the scheme aims to address the invisible barriers to access to flower farming for these groups. Each recipient will receive £200 towards a flower-farming course, as well as one-to-one monitoring sessions with an experienced flower farmer, and other practical help including seed and tool starter kits, and a selection of reference books. Flowers from the Farm, which this month celebrates its tenth anniversary, has more than 900 members from Cornwall to Inverness, and last year welcomed 130 new British, independent growers to its community. **flowersfromthefarm.co.uk**

Make your mark

Ensure houseplant success with this stylish new pot design from the London-based brand Anther + Moss. The new tulip-shaped Edith pot is sturdy enough to anchor large, sculptural plants, but can also work well with smaller, more intricate plant species. Better yet, its made from unlined concrete, which absorbs water out of the soil and lets it evaporate, so no waterlogged soil or root rot will occur. With time, the water leaves its trace on the pots, creating a beautiful, rustic appearance. Available in two sizes, 12cm and 14cm, which cost £23 and £31 respectively. ***antherandmoss.com***

Some like it hot

One warming thought this month is the prospect of sowing seeds for a summer crop. These new chilli pepper seeds from Suttons can be sown now up until April in time for a July to October harvest. Named Chilli Longhorn F1, thanks to its chillies' long, curled appearance, this chilli pepper plant can withstand intense sun without damage and will produce copious amounts of fruit. It can grow up to 1m in height so a plant support may be required. The chillies themselves are packed with flavour but aren't spectacularly spicy, so can be incorporated into a range of dishes. The seeds need a good quality, moist seed compost and to be placed in a propagator on a windowsill for around two weeks to germinate. A packet of 12 seeds costs £3.99 from **suttons.co.uk**

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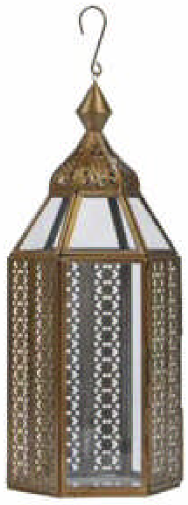
LOGS

Caffeine boost

Cosying up by a roaring fire may be one of the joys of winter, but burning wood is not always the most sustainable way to keep your home warm. One eco-option is Coffee Logs, made from waste coffee grounds. The grounds from around 25 cups of coffee are packed into one log alone, and they'll burn 20 per cent longer than kiln-dried wood; and are hotter too. They are ideal for wood-burners and multi-fuel stoves and come in an easy-carry, fully-recyclable bag. ***Available for £6.99 from selected supermarkets and DIY stores, and online at Ocado and LogsDirect.***

3 FOR THE GARDEN… *LANTERNS*



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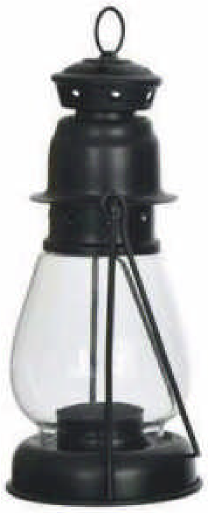
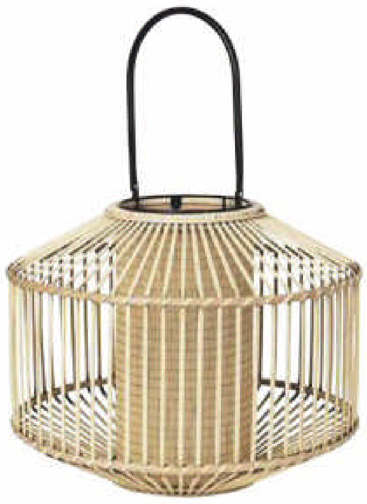
Asilah Artisan Moroccan Lantern
£29.99, Lights4fun
01423 816040, lights4fun.co.uk



STURDY
Miners Lantern
£18, Garden Trading
01993 845 559, gardentrading.co.uk



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1. Potting Tarp in Camel & Natural Cork, from £19, shibui-ilk.co.uk; **B.For Original Round Mini Flowerpot,** ochre, 7cm, £1.49, **B.For Soft Round Flowerpot,** leaf green, 14cm, £3.29, both elho.com; houseplants from a selection at beardsanddaisies.co.uk **2. Hozelock Hose Reel Cart With Hose Pipe,** with 20m hose (45m capacity), £48, 0330 123 4123, wickes.co.uk **3. Fiskars Solid Garden Fork,** £22.08, 020 3871 8515, uktoolcentre.co.uk **4. Woolly Hat,** nezumi grey, £36, 01747 445059, niwaki.com **5. Nutscene Colourful Jute Twine Spool,** orange, £4, 07939 486713, thewonderfulgardencompany.co.uk **6. Heavy Duty Garden Dump Trolley Cart,** 75 litres, £74.99, vonhaus.com **7. Eco Plant Markers,** pack of five, £4.99, crocus.co.uk **8. Bamboo & Rice Pots & Saucers,** sage green and terracotta, sold as set of five (single colour), 12.7cm, from £14.99, 0344 967 0330, organiccatalogue.com **9. Moreton Potting Bench,** spruce, 91x89cm, £280, 01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk

1

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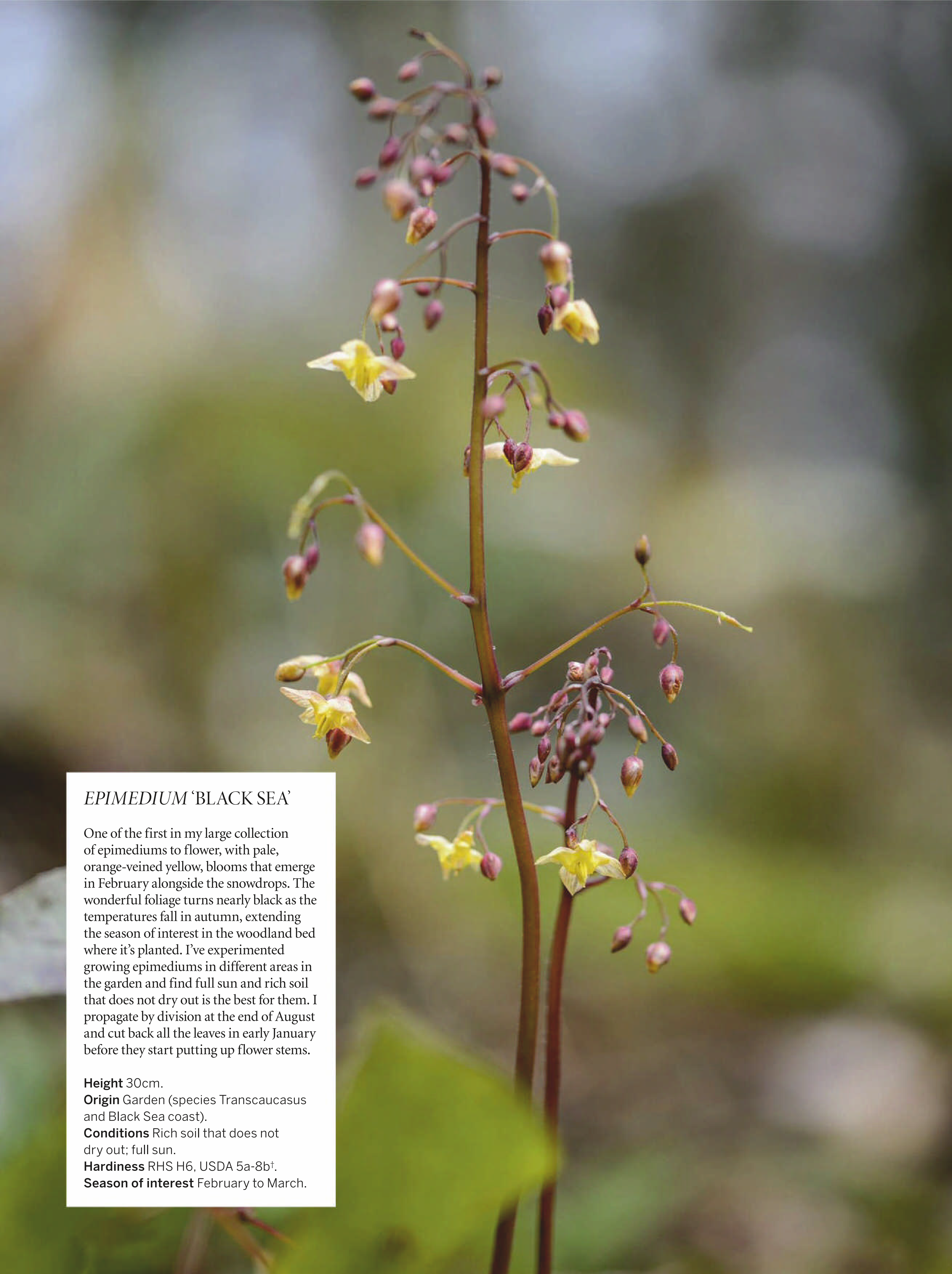


EPIMEDIUM ‘BLACK SEA’

One of the first in my large collection of epimediums to flower, with pale, orange-veined yellow, blooms that emerge in February alongside the snowdrops. The wonderful foliage turns nearly black as the temperatures fall in autumn, extending the season of interest in the woodland bed where it’s planted. I’ve experimented growing epimediums in different areas in the garden and find full sun and rich soil that does not dry out is the best for them. I propagate by division at the end of August and cut back all the leaves in early January before they start putting up flower stems.

Height 30cm.
Origin Garden (species Transcaucasus and Black Sea coast).
Conditions Rich soil that does not dry out; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b[†].
Season of interest February to March.

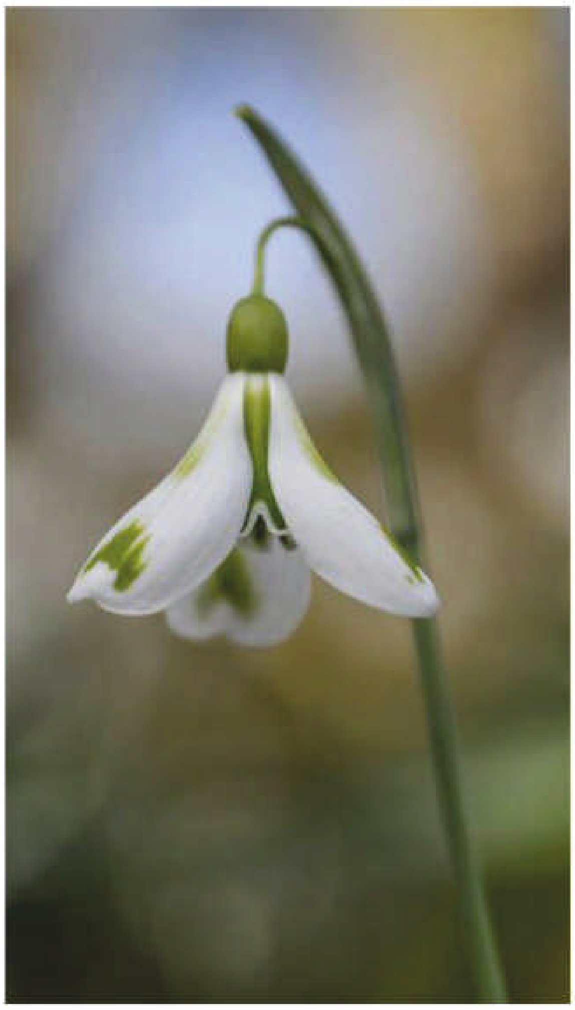
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

February plants

In the first of a new series, plantsperson Jimi Blake chooses some much-needed colour to brighten early spring, including a fragrant beauty worth getting down close to enjoy

WORDS JIMI BLAKE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Jimi Blake runs Hunting Brook Gardens near Dublin. **huntingbrook.com**



GALANTHUS 'VERONICA CROSS'

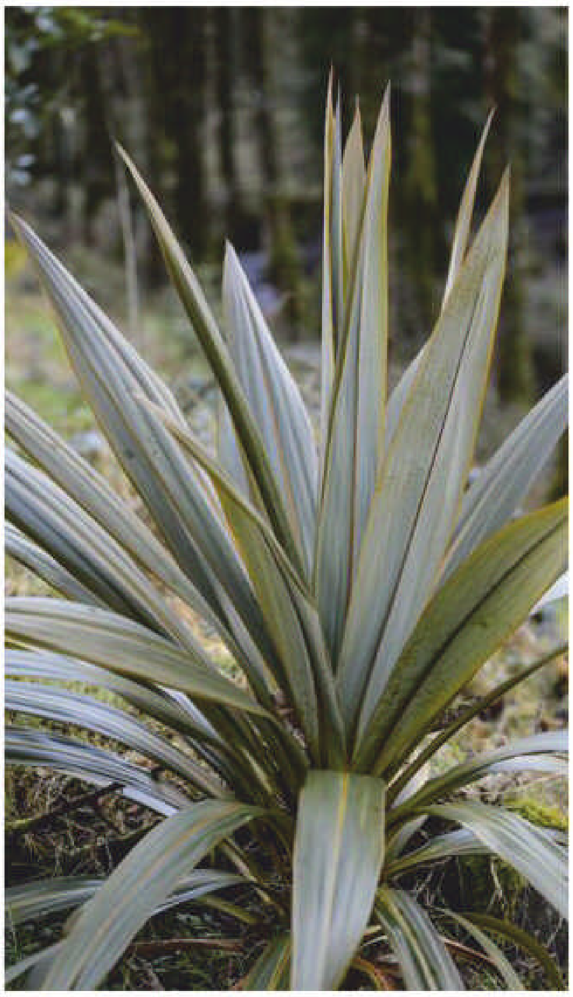
In recent years there have emerged a lot of new snowdrops that have interesting green markings but for me 'Veronica Cross' stands out from the rest. It was a chance cross from the Hertfordshire garden of the wonderful plantswoman and galanthophile Veronica Cross, whom I was lucky enough to visit a few times. If you can't get your hands on *Galanthus* 'Veronica Cross' you must try its parent *Galanthus plicatus* 'Trymlet', which has similar markings and bulks up really fast for me.

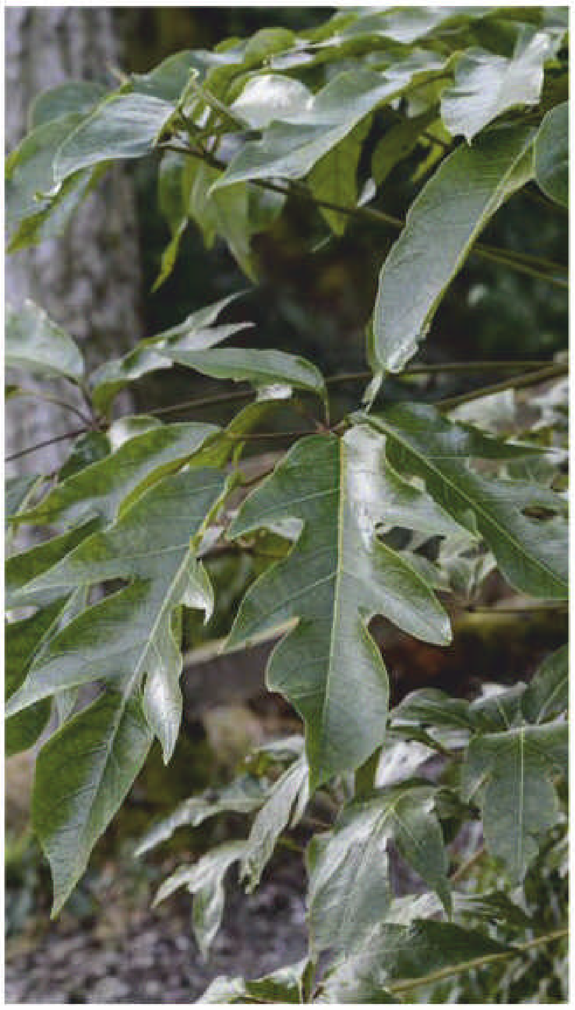
Height 20cm.
Origin Garden.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; dappled shade with some direct sunshine.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest January to February.

CORDYLINE INDIVISA

Cordyline indivisa can be tricky to grow but they are as happy as Larry here in the valley at Hunting Brook. I have them repeated throughout the valley giving it an exotic look and evergreen structure all year around. This exotic look is created by their sword-shaped foliage and orange defined midrib in the leaf. They are surprisingly hardy, surviving to -15°C with me in 2010. I propagate them from seeds and keep potting them up to get rapid growth before planting out. I unfortunately never got to see these in the wild when I was in New Zealand, but I dream of being able to do so one day.

Height 3m.
Origin New Zealand.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.
Season of interest Year round for foliage.





SCHEFFLERA DELAVAYI

The Araliaceae family is one of my main passions in the plant world and I particularly love the scheffleras, which are among the main plants repeated through the valley here at Hunting Brook. If I had to leave the garden tomorrow and I could take only one plant with me it would be this one. It has a dramatic umbrella-like canopy and has terminal panicles of flowers in autumn. It seems to be totally hardy with me but I did bring it into the glasshouse for the first two winters. I then let it grow and mature before planting out. As you can see I adore this plant for its spectacular foliage.

Height 3m.
Origin China and Vietnam.
Conditions Well-drained soil and sheltered from cold winds; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

Paul's walking no longer an uphill battle thanks to **TURMERIC+**

Walking is one of the most beneficial forms of exercise, and also one of the most underestimated in terms of well-being. It's a great way to reach the recommended level of physical activity needed to stay healthy without the toll to joints, ligaments and muscles that more demanding sports exact.

"Soon after taking it I experienced that 'light-bulb' moment"

When taking longer walks however, some of us can experience skeletal and muscular discomfort. Paul Goddard, 62, a Nordic Walking instructor from Saffron Walden in Essex, swears by a product called Turmeric+ as an effective means of keeping him active.

"I decided to become a Nordic Walking instructor in 2009 and started walking forty to fifty miles a week. Two years ago it became uncomfortable to walk distances that should have been easy for someone of my age and fitness levels. I felt very apprehensive as walking is not only my passion, but my business."

Paul continues: "I started doing some research. I learned that turmeric could be helpful and bought supplements … and then stumbled upon Turmeric+."

Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, is difficult for the body to absorb, Some turmeric products offer high levels of curcumin but unless this is easily absorbed by the body, the higher amounts make little difference.

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"Soon after taking it I experienced that 'light-bulb' moment - I realised my knees felt like they used to. I take Turmeric+ religiously now. I walk around two hundred miles a month and even my customers have remarked on my mobility.

"Walking is great for fitness as well as your mental health. Being able to walk easily has made a huge difference to my life and I feel fitter now than I did twenty years ago."

Adam Cleevely, CEO of FutureYou Cambridge comments;

"We want to support more people to get active and we think Turmeric+ can play an important role in that journey. We have tens of thousands of happy Turmeric+ subscribers who regularly tell us about their positive stories, just like Paul."

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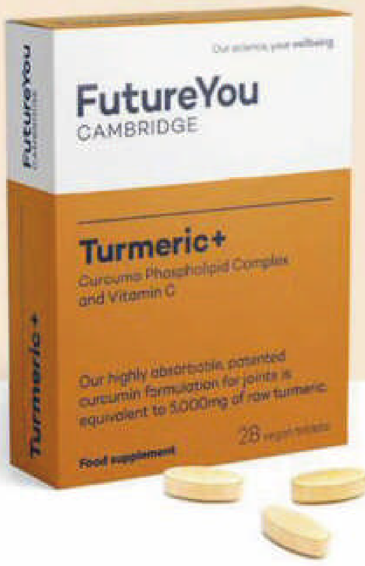
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Since launching the product the company has continually received positive feedback from happy customers, particularly on Trustpilot, the independent online review platform.

'As far as I'm concerned this stuff is magic… Highly recommend!' wrote one 5 star reviewer. 'The product appears to meet all its promises and the service levels from FutureYou are first class,' said another.

'We're very happy to give people their first pack for free so they can experience it for themselves,' says Adam Cleevely, the company's CEO.

'It might sound bonkers but it really isn't. We're that confident in the effectiveness of our formulation.

'I can't think of a better way to convince people. If they like it, they will stick with it. Tens of thousands of customers already do.'

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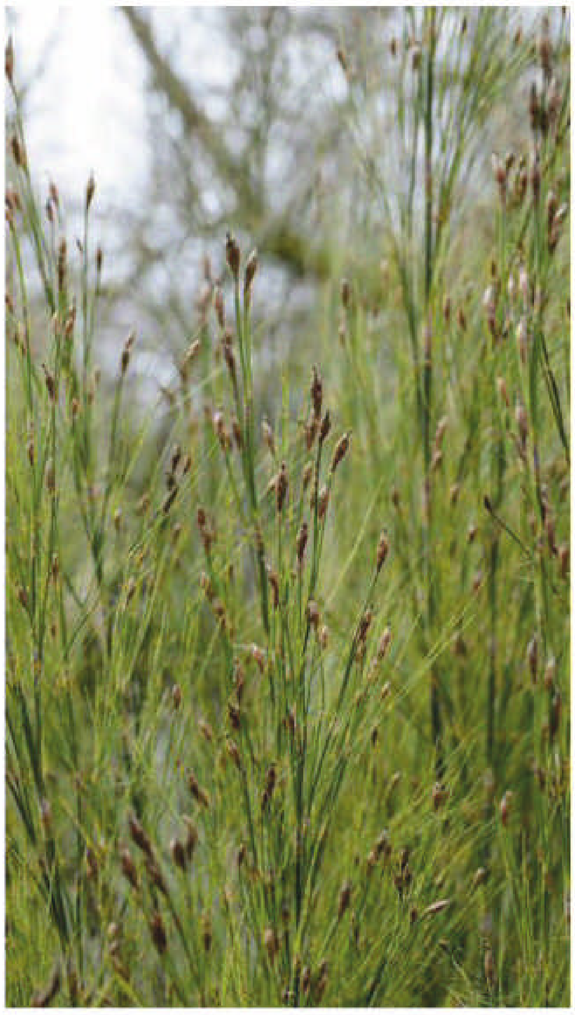
Trustpilot ★★★★★

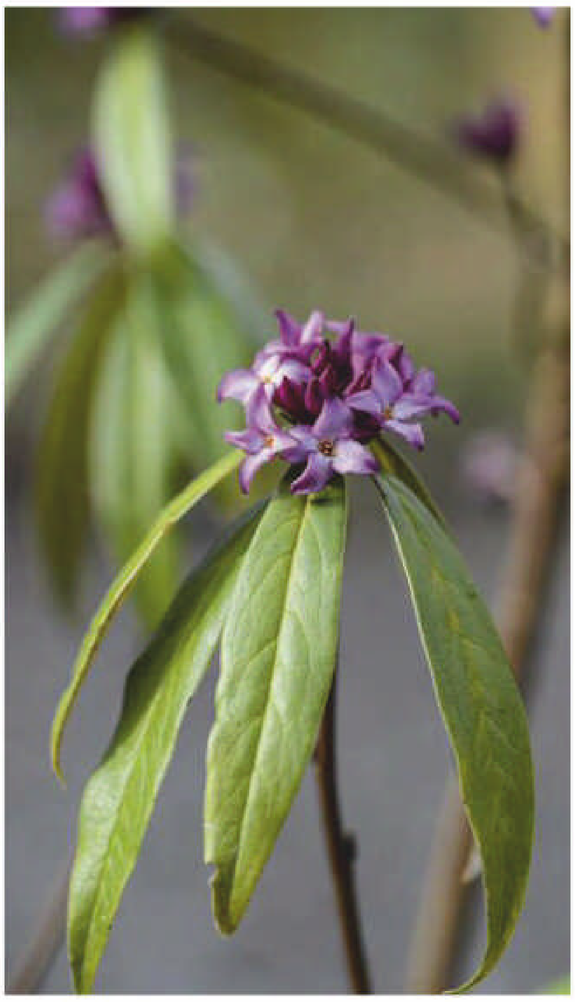
It's when I'm lying on the ground looking at my snowdrops that I really get a good look at the extraordinary flower of *Helonias thibetica*

CANNOMOIS GRANDIS

This restio has survived here at Hunting Brook at temperatures as low as -15°C, so I can see its huge potential as a good garden plant. I have it planted in full sun where it has excellent drainage and that has definitely helped it survive. The older the plant the tougher it becomes. I cut untidy stems at the base in spring to keep the plant looking fresh. Restios prefer a neutral to acid soil but if you can't provide this, grow them in pots of acidic compost. I have just planted a collection of different restios to see which will be the most hardy and also to use them as cut foliage in my flower arrangements. AGM*.

Height 2.5m.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Neutral to acid soil with good drainage but not too dry; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.





DAPHNE BHOLUA 'MARY ROSE'

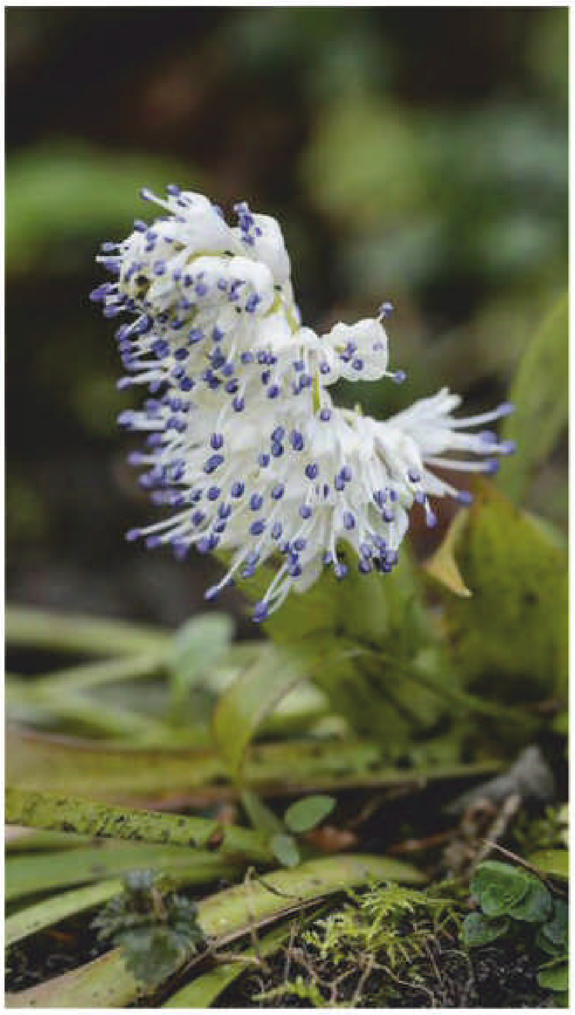
I always make a yearly pilgrimage to Pan-Global Plants in Gloucestershire where I found this absolute gem of a daphne. The deep-purple buds form in December to January and then open to deep-pink flowers in February and March. The flowers have a delicious scent, which I adore on my early morning walks at this time of year. This daphne has an upright growth habit that makes it easy to fit into most gardens. When you're planting any daphne please remember to plant it where it will stay as all daphnes resent transplanting.

Height 2-3m.
Origin Garden (species eastern Himalaya).
Conditions Well-drained soil; sun or semi shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Winter to early spring.

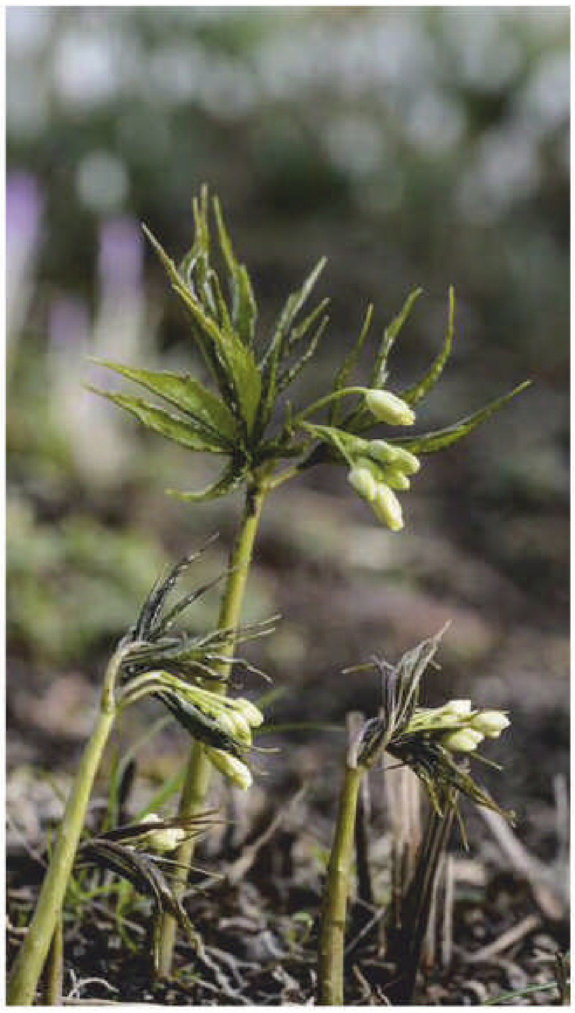
HELONIAS THIBETICA

Previously known as *Ypsilandra thibetica*, this evergreen perennial has fabulously fragrant white flowers with blue anthers growing out of a rosette of foliage. It always flowers around snowdrop time in February and it's normally when I'm lying on the ground looking at my snowdrops that I really get a good look at this extraordinary flower and take in its beautiful fragrance. It can be propagated by fresh seed surface sown through a layer of grit when seed is ripe in late spring. The early spring plant fairs can be a good place to look for this woodland gem.

Height 33cm.
Origin Central and southern China.
Conditions Good woodland soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Early spring.



Cardamine enneaphyllos is not a plant that is widely available but I believe any plant that flowers this time of year is worth sourcing and growing



CARDAMINE ENNEAPHYLLOS

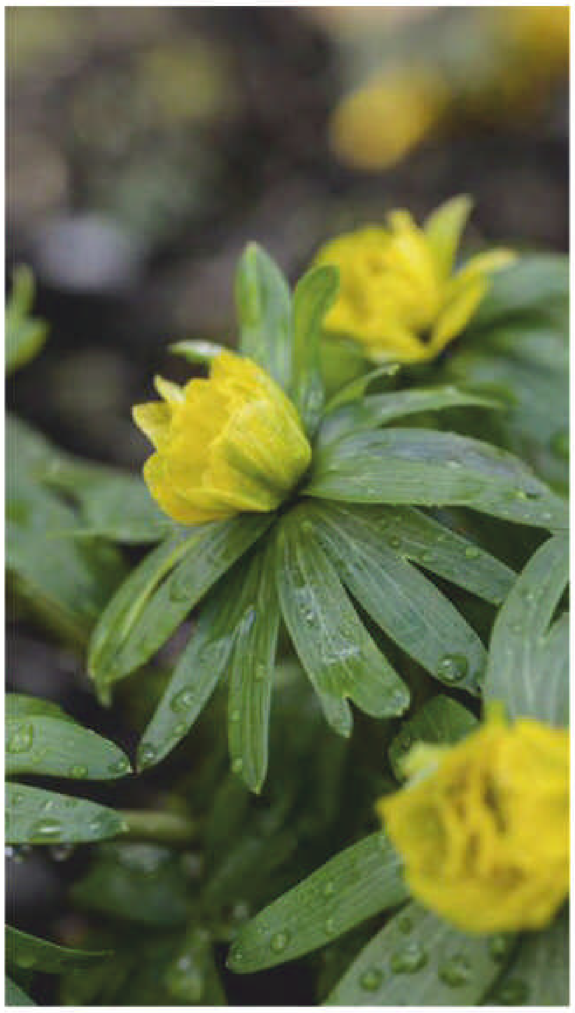
This rather lovely plant with its delicate, nodding yellow flowers is one I originally acquired from the great plantswoman and garden designer Helen Dillon. It now grows in my woodland garden where it has grown extremely slowly but flowers with the snowdrops in the worst of winter weather. When its foliage appears in late January it has a deep reddish-black colour followed by ivory/yellow-coloured pendulous flowers. It's not a plant that is widely available but I believe any plant that flowers at this time of year is worth sourcing and growing.

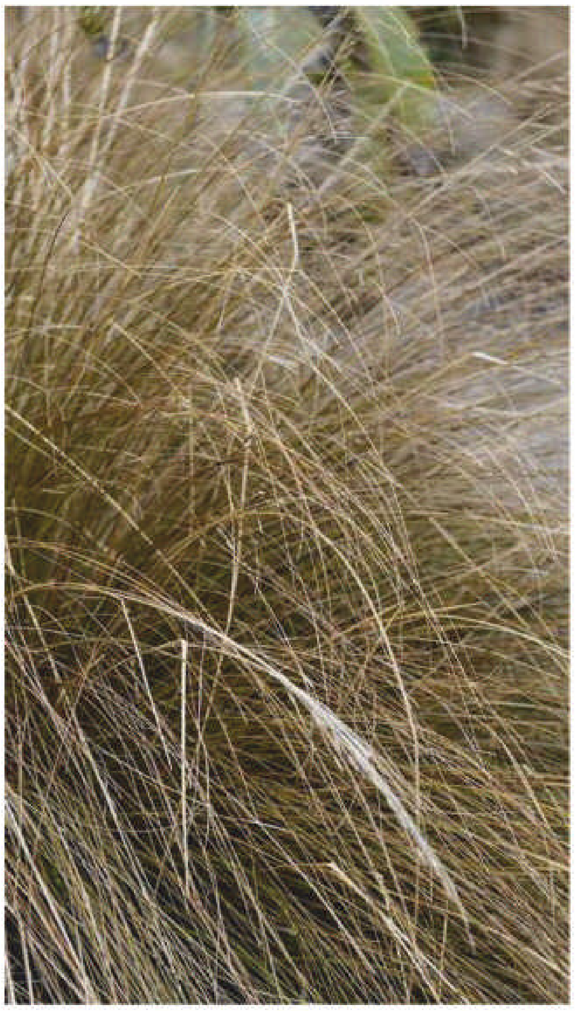
Height 30cm.
Origin Central Europe.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest February to March.

ERANTHIS HYEMALIS 'NOËL AYRES'

I would collect anything that flowers this early, but I especially love *Eranthis* for their vibrant yellow flowers at a time when there is so little colour in the garden. This particular cultivar flowers a little later than most others. It bursts into bloom mid to late February with double flowers and outer petals that are more green than yellow. I propagate these by division when the leaves start to turn yellow (after flowering) or from seed sown once ripe. They look good combined with the less vigorous snowdrops and early flowering crocuses.

Height 10cm.
Origin Garden (species western Europe).
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil with good drainage; light shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Spring.





CHIONOCHLOA RUBRA

This tufted, evergreen grass, known as red tussock grass has to be beyond any doubt my favourite ornamental grass. I was lucky enough to see *Chionochloa rubra* growing wild in its native New Zealand where it covered hillsides grazed by sheep. It's a large grass with a tawny-orange colour and a spray of seedheads in the autumn. This *Chionochloa rubra* is an extremely low-maintenance grass only needing its old flowering stems removed in spring. I have never been successful propagating it from division but seed propagation is possible in spring. AGM.

Height 1.5m.
Origin New Zealand.
Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Year round.

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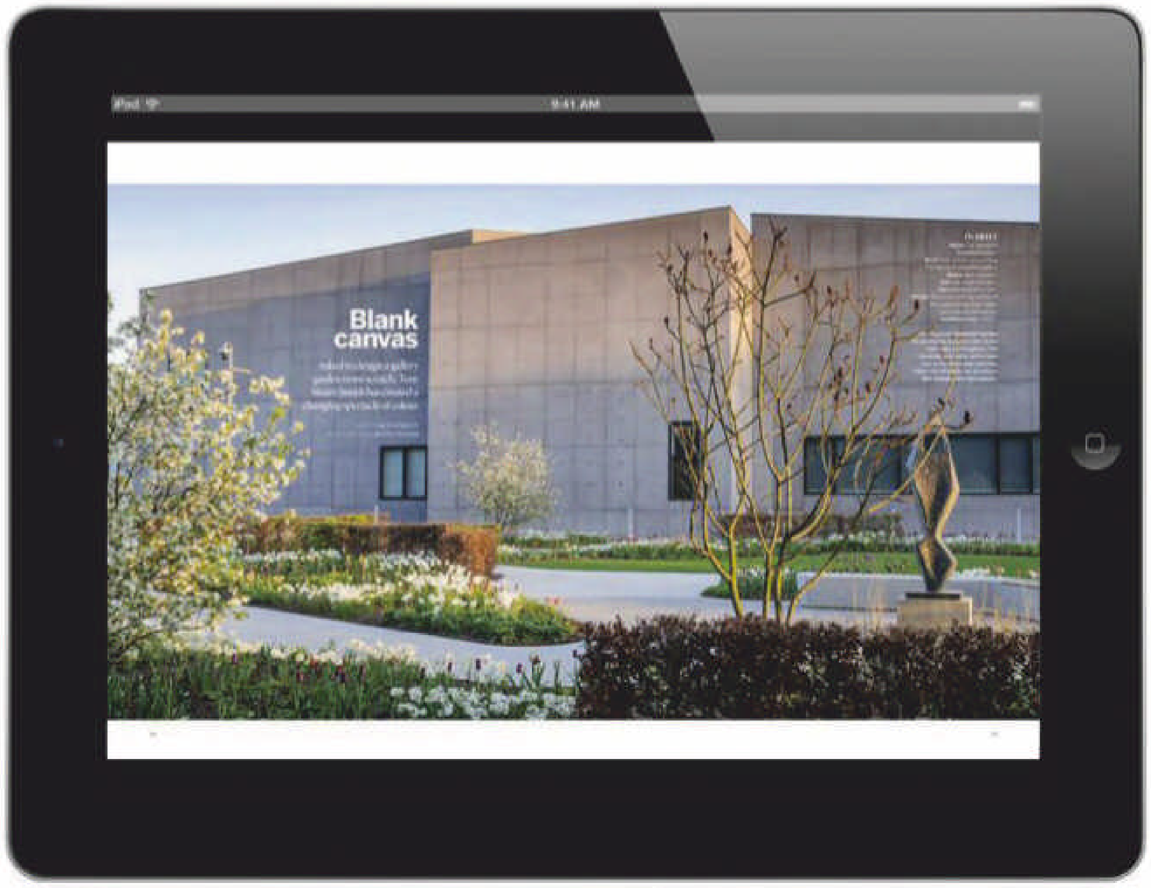
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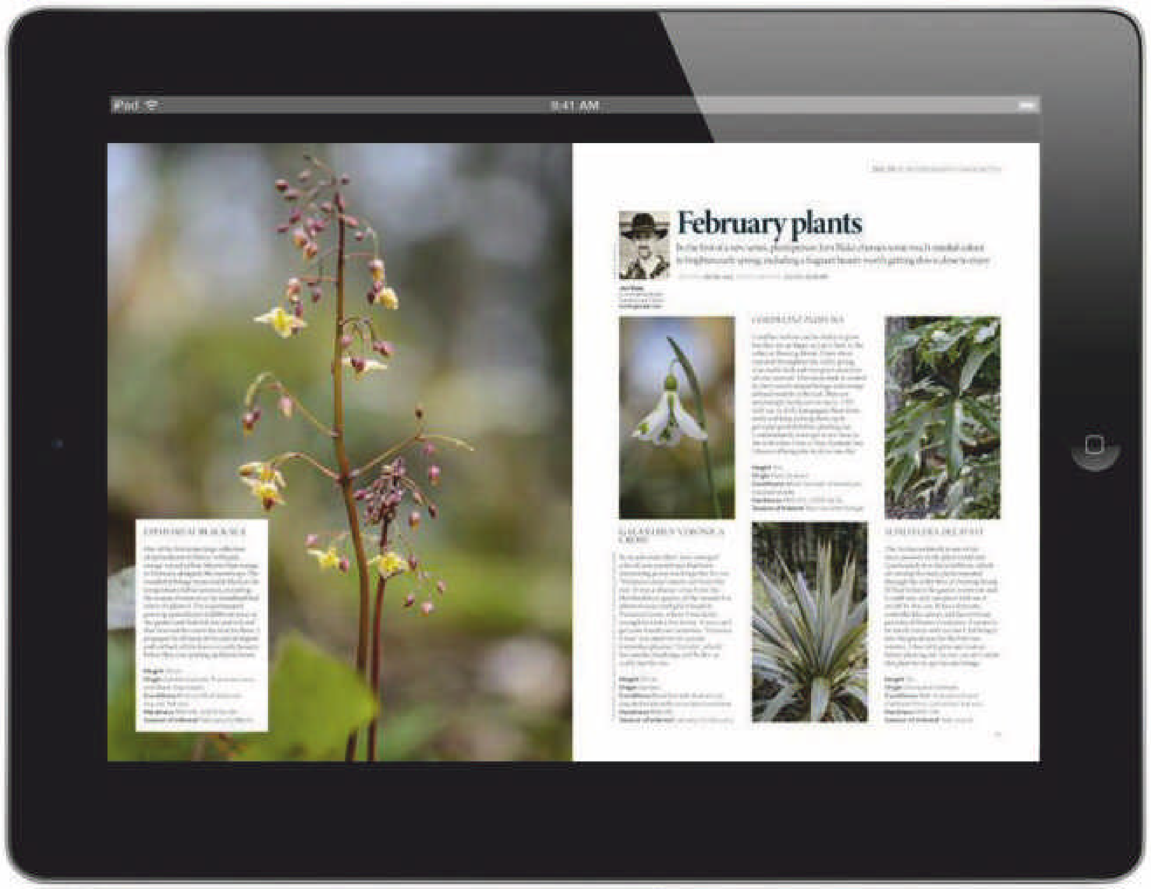
February plants

Outward looking

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CHECKLIST
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~~prune trees~~
~~empty pots~~
~~clean up~~
~~SOUP~~
CHIT POTATOES
RECIPE: Ro sou
1 celeriac
500g carrots/pars
500
emon

WINTER SUNSHINE

This cold but thankfully short month is one Aaron is happy to forget about. But while February offers gardeners the opportunity for a well-earned rest there are still seed potatoes to order and salad seeds to sow before the onset of spring – and if like Aaron you are lucky enough to have space to overwinter citrus fruits to inject a little winter sunshine into late winter dishes

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

February is my least favourite month of the year. About the only positive thing I can think of to say about it is that it is short. This is the perfect time to run through a quick checklist to make sure everything is in order. The soil has been dug over, fruit trees and shrubs have been pruned, pots have been emptied of spent compost and given a thorough brush and clean up, and my garden tools are gleaming, all sharpened edges and freshly oiled handles.

Being an organised type, all these things bring me great pleasure. But there are other reasons to be cheerful, too. Minute by minute, the days are getting longer and, on those days when the sun puts in an appearance, it is easy to believe that spring is round the corner. The main event though is the delivery of the seed order. This year, I have added a new item to my list of things to order well in advance – seed potatoes. Just as with other seeds you need to order early to get the best selection. For me, the arrival of these few cardboard boxes with their precious paper packages is a true harbinger of better – and brighter – days to come.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CROPS

February can be a challenging time in the kitchen, too. Rather than spending my time craving novelty, though, I try to embrace these last days of winter and really make the most of the root vegetables and greens that are at their best right now. Celeriac, Jerusalem artichokes, carrots and parsnips are all wonderful in soup – my go-to winter lunchtime dish – with a slice of good bread and some cheese.

That said, it does do the soul good to taste something fresh and different, and an injection of vitamin C is most welcome at this time of year. I am very lucky to have access to my friend Mrs Nextdoor's summer house, where I can overwinter my lemon trees. By now, the fruit should be turning from green to yellow and be ripe and ready to use.

But perhaps the best way to enjoy the freshness of citrus in February is to combine it with the sweet indulgence most of us crave at this time of year. I use my fruits in a wonderful Tunisian cake, a recipe from my friend Gaye, which makes use of both the juice and the rind of lemons, with some orange added in for a little extra sunshine. ❑

You can find Aaron's recipe for Tunisian lemon and orange cake at gardensillustrated.com/recipes

Jobs for February

Check around the base of fruit bushes for weeds and self-sowers. The ground around them should be clear to the drip line – that is, the outer edge of the plant's canopy.

Plants that have been overwintering inside or under glass can be brought out on milder days to enjoy some fresh air. This will help to stimulate growth and reduce the risk of pests and diseases. Generally, I do find that the harder a plant is grown, the healthier it tends to be.

Depending on the weather, you may be able to start sowing seed. I always start at the highest point of the garden, where the sun hits and a good solid yew hedge provides a bit of shelter. Provided it is not too wet or cold, I will start sowing broad beans, beetroot and parsnips directly into the soil from the end of February.

If you're not willing to take the risk of sowing direct, you can get seeds started under glass or just on a windowsill. I like to use a large plug tray – this way, the seedlings can grow on to a decent size without my having to bother with pricking them out.

If you are only going to sow one thing in the ground, may I suggest spring onions? They are extremely tough and very useful in the kitchen, particularly as the crop of leeks is coming to an end. I find it very difficult to grow onions as our soil is so heavy – spring onions make an excellent substitute.

Start chitting potatoes. Place them eye end up, in a cool – but frost-free – spot, with plenty of light. A windowsill is perfect. I like to use the one outside my bedroom so that each morning I am reminded that spring is coming, and things are starting to move again. Egg boxes make an ideal container, or if you are gardening on a larger scale try a shallow wooden box, using sections of folded newspaper to hold each spud in place.

Sow salad. You can do this direct in the soil, but I find I get better results at this time of year from sowing in pots. The soil is warmer, and the whole pot can be moved inside if the weather gets really cold. I like to use a seed mix, so that I get a good range of flavours and colours.

Finally, be ready with the hessian or fleece. These early crops will thank you for a bit of protection. Prop the covering up with a few sticks or stakes, though, to avoid damaging the emerging seedlings.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Stake in the future

PAUL
PLEDGE

Having survived cancer, Paul is now pledging a gift in his Will to Cancer Research UK so his son can grow up in a world where more people can beat cancer

Watching Paul kick a ball around the garden with his seven-year-old son, it's hard to imagine quite how seriously ill Paul was little more than ten years ago. But in 2007, aged 34, Paul was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia. "I'd had a cough and blurred vision, but it wasn't until my eyesight deteriorated dramatically that I was given an MRI scan and received the devastating news that I had cancer," he says. "I was immediately prescribed a drug called Glivec and continued to take this for a further 22 months."

Glivec is just one of the many drugs that have been developed in part through the work of Cancer Research UK. In fact, Cancer Research UK's work has played a role in developing eight of the world's top ten cancer drugs. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fundraising has fallen and future research is at risk; research that saves lives like Paul's. One in two people in the UK born after 1960 will get cancer in their lifetime, which is why Cancer Research UK is determined to continue its research.

It's also why Paul has pledged to leave a gift in his Will to Cancer Research UK. Gifts in Wills fund more than a third of Cancer Research UK's life-saving research; they are vital to what the charity does. Without the generous supporters who leave gifts in their Wills much of its research simply couldn't take place.

If you join Paul in pledging to leave a gift in your Will you will be pledging to help beat cancer for future generations. Types of gifts you can leave include a specific amount or item, or you can choose to leave a percentage of your estate – known as a residuary gift. Meanwhile, Cancer Research UK will join you in pledging that researchers will do all they can to make the breakthroughs that can help create a world where everyone survives cancer.

In 2019 Paul and his wife Emma visited the Cancer Research UK Legacy Garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival so Paul could see his Pledge Stake (above) – one of many wooden stakes placed throughout the garden, each carved with the name of one of the amazing people who have pledged to leave a gift in their Will to Cancer Research UK. Paul's stake now takes pride of place in his own garden.

"At the moment, our garden is a bit more of a practical place for seven-year-old Freddie to kick a football around in," says Paul, "but we are getting more and more into it and have been talking about how planting can be such a gift for the future. It's a real project to look forward to as Freddie gets older."

Thanks to the work of Cancer Research UK Paul now has a real stake in his son's future, and Freddie has an opportunity to grow up in a world where more people survive cancer.

To find out more, request a free Gifts in Wills Guide. Visit cruk.org/willsguide or call 0800 077 6644.

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247)

GARDENING TALENT

JUDYTA UBYCH

Working as assistant gardener for the City of London Corporation, Judyta's role is to keep Nigel Dunnett's exemplary urban plantings at The Barbican in fine form

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memories Both of my grandmothers were wonderful gardeners, one had a garden and the other an allotment, and I have lots of happy memories of spending time with them there. In my family, home-grown produce and fresh flowers were celebrated in seasonal dishes and eagerly anticipated at family gatherings.

Who has inspired your career? Carol Klein's enthusiasm for plants and plant science was highly infectious at the beginning of my adventure with horticulture when I binge-watched and read anything and everything to do with gardening.

Is gardening a career change? I never considered horticulture as a career while living in Poland. I studied social anthropology, travelled and struggled to find a fitting career. When a company I worked for closed down, I began to volunteer on organic farms and to visit gardens. These things made me realise that I was the happiest when gardening and so I gave it a go professionally.

Worthwhile tips Know your plants, learn how they grow in their native habitat, what their specific needs are. That way you can allow plants to become resilient, most will find a way to thrive without being mollycoddled. This allows you to garden more sustainably, and water less frequently. Stagger your cutting back to allow for a fuller plant cycle and to support wildlife. And keep taking notes and remember to look back over them throughout the year.

Dream plant destination During this time of travel restriction, I keep dreaming of trekking through southwest Poland in the Carpathian Mountains region where I grew up. It has unique flora and is interesting all year round.

Favourite 'weed' you are happy to have in your garden *Verbena officinalis* var. *grandiflora* 'Bampton'; it self-seeds profusely, somehow travelling from my home to the allotment, and, apart for being a pollinator magnet it, looks very handsome popping up through my kale plants.

What's the future for horticulture? I hope there will be further improvement of urban green spaces – they provide an essential space to connect people with plants so that we are all invested in protecting the natural world for the future.

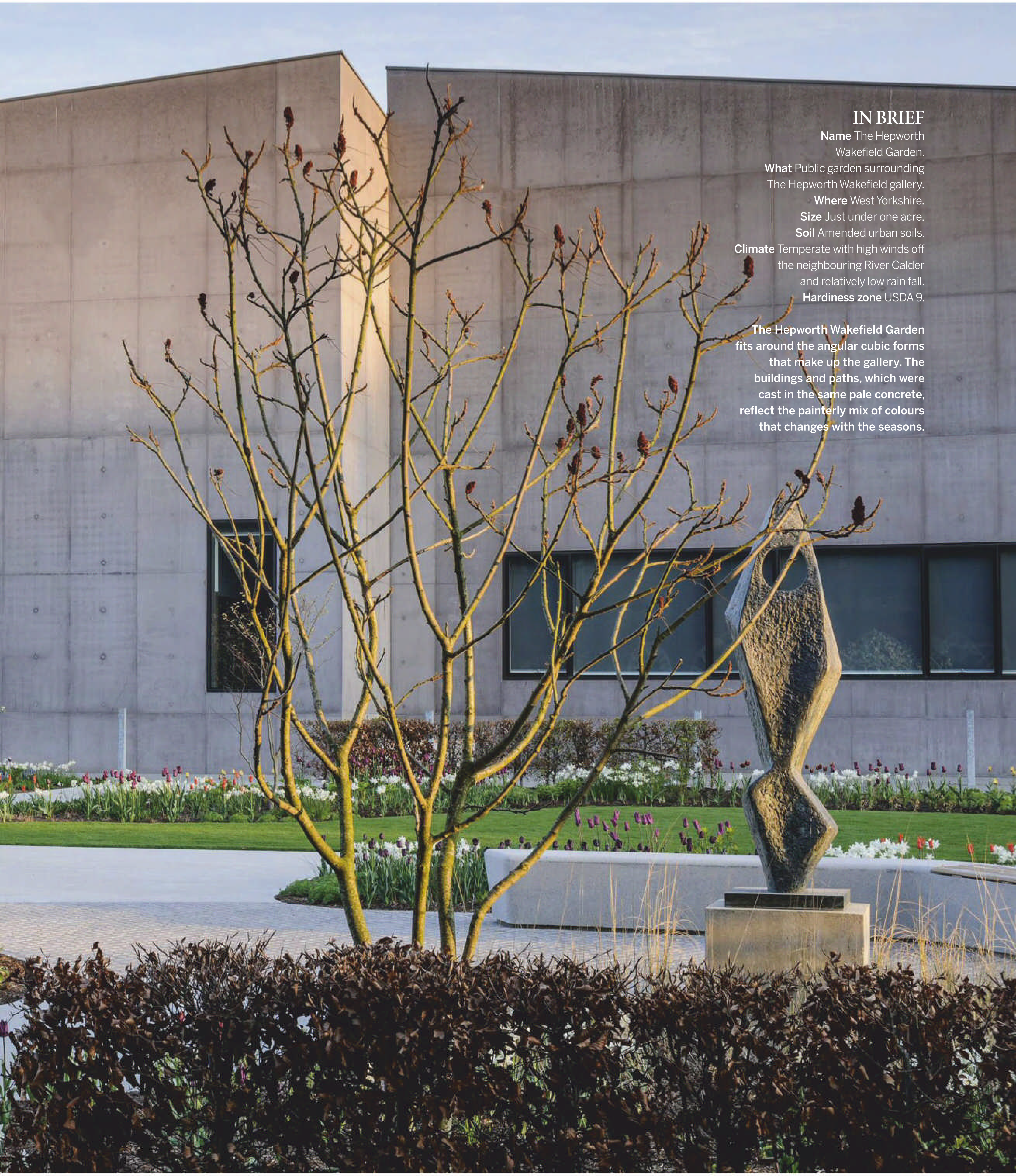
Contact Find Judyta on Instagram @outinthegreen. For more about Beech Gardens at the Barbican Estate go to cityoflondon.gov.uk and nigeldunnett.com/barbican

Home-grown produce and fresh flowers were eagerly anticipated at family gatherings

Blank canvas

Asked to design a gallery garden from scratch, Tom Stuart-Smith has created a changing spectacle of colour

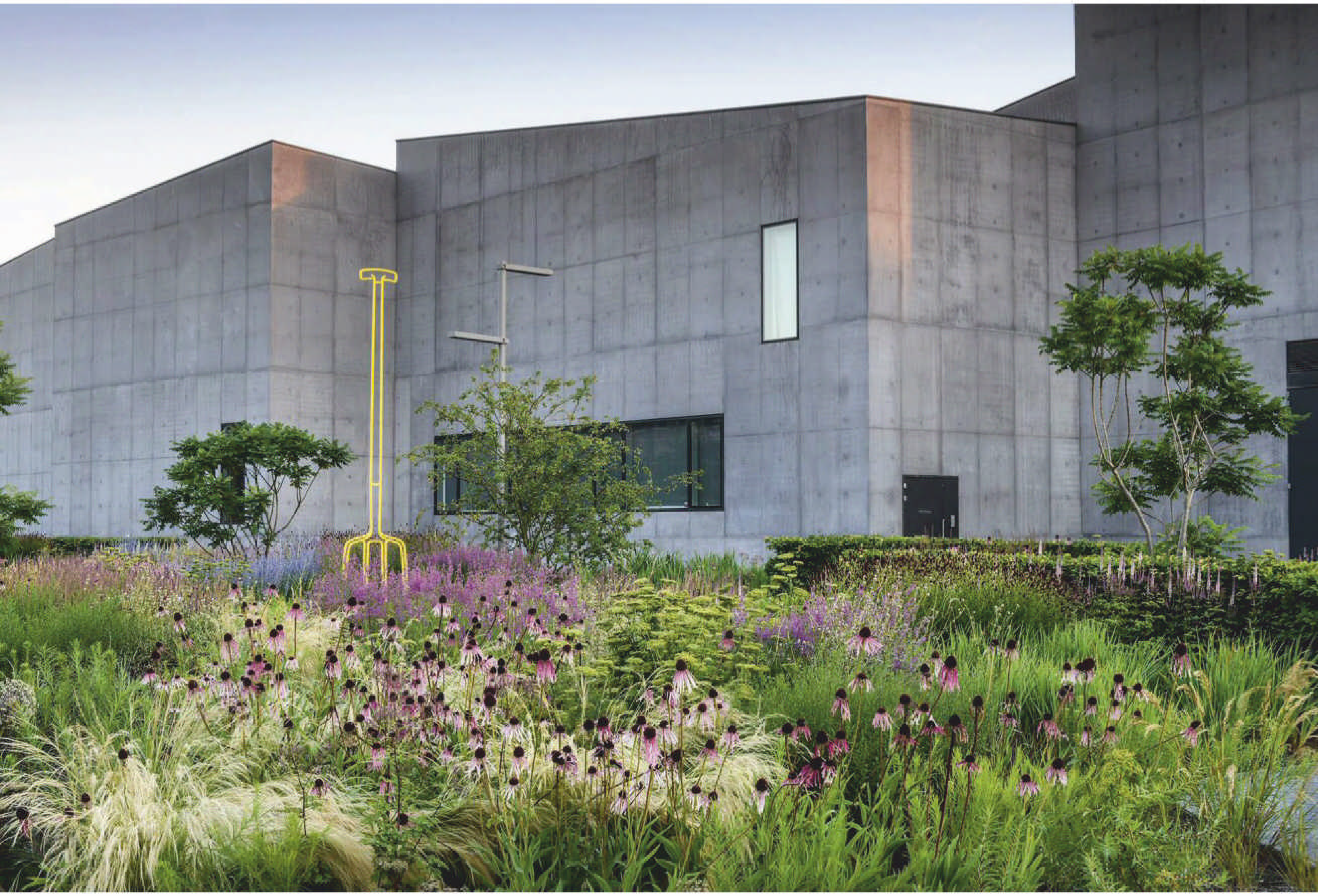
WORDS ALYS FOWLER
PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



IN BRIEF

Name The Hepworth Wakefield Garden.
What Public garden surrounding The Hepworth Wakefield gallery.
Where West Yorkshire.
Size Just under one acre.
Soil Amended urban soils.
Climate Temperate with high winds off the neighbouring River Calder and relatively low rain fall.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The Hepworth Wakefield Garden fits around the angular cubic forms that make up the gallery. The buildings and paths, which were cast in the same pale concrete, reflect the painterly mix of colours that changes with the seasons.



There are many elements that make up a good public garden and the one at The Hepworth Wakefield in West Yorkshire has bagged them all. This award-winning gallery has had the foresight and ambition to create a truly unique garden. As its wonderfully titled cultural gardener, Katy Merrington, explains: "It's very rare to make a garden of such quality, and then to make it free and open 24 hours a day."

The garden sits behind the gallery, which is a series of trapezoidal concrete forms designed by David Chipperfield Architects, and the Victorian mills from which the town once made its fortune. "It's a uniquely curious setting," explains Katy. "The context around the gallery is an industrial estate, six lanes of roaring traffic and a raging river." It needed a thoughtful approach that could create a sanctuary from all of this noise – and who better than a designer at the top of his game, Tom Stuart-Smith.

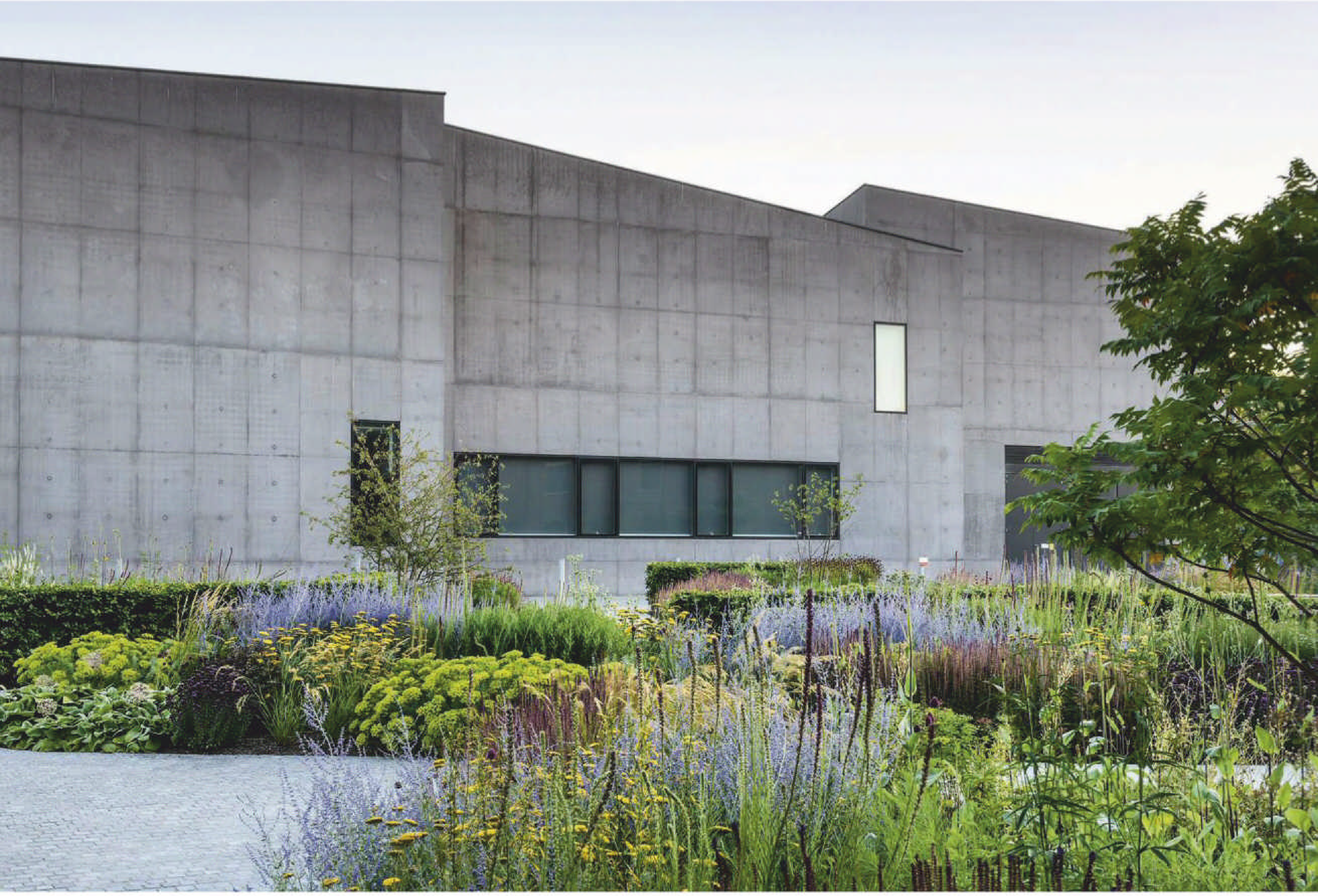
At the road end Tom decided to put a 4.4m-tall wall to muffle the hum of traffic. "I felt that we had to create a precinct, not in a stuffy collegiate way, but to make a hallowed ground of the space. There's so much convergency in this garden with the river and the roads, and it needed a sense or curtilage," he explains.

This wall creates a sense of protection that is further enhanced by tall pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) planted around it to create ▷

Facing page In spring, the sculpture *Ascending Form (Gloria)*, 1958 by Barbara Hepworth is surrounded by a pool of *Pennisetum* 'Fairy Tails', brightened by the whites of 'Thalia' and 'Toto' daffodils and purple *Tulipa* 'Negrita'.

Above By high summer the borders take on a neon zing. Here the flamingo pinks of *Lythrum salicaria* 'Swirl' and *Echinacea pallida* offer a fabulous contrast to Sir Michael Craig-Martin's *Pitchfork (Yellow)*, 2013. Once the pink petals have fallen in autumn, seedheads are left to contrast with the blondes of the grass, *Stipa calamagrostis*.

I thought colour is going to be so important in this garden. I wanted there to be a real succession of it from April to November



Facing page The crab apple *Malus* 'Evereste' offers three seasons of colour, announcing its arrival in spring with the white blossom just in time for the bulbs. Here *Narcissus* 'Thalia' sits among *Tulipa* 'Negrita' in the foreground, in the middle *Tulipa* 'Purple Heart' and *Tulipa* 'Merlot' in front of the beech hedge.

Above The lime greens of *Euphorbia seguieriana* against the palest sky blues of *Salvia* 'Blue Spire' and the garden green of the beech hedge accentuate the modern lines of the concrete.

▷ a secluded woodland feel with planting easing out to more open areas. Pin oaks are used again, at the opposite end as if to bookend the garden and between these are fairly open meadows of colourful perennials with smaller trees.

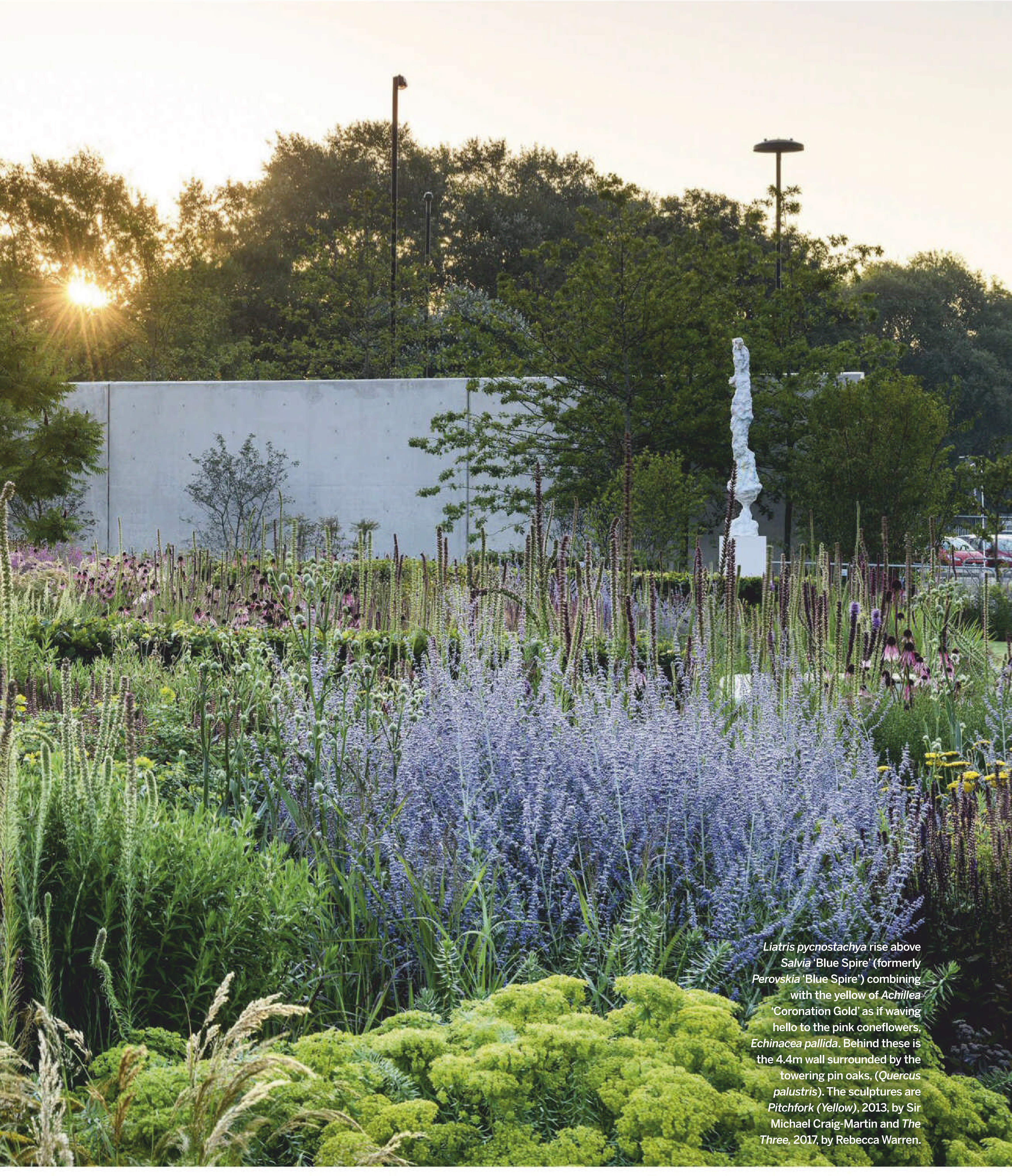
"I just thought colour is going to be so important in this garden. I wanted a real succession of it from April to November," says Tom. "There needs to be always something happening for locals, perhaps more than for visitors. It's quite consciously not a minimalist palette that you might expect to find outside of a gallery, but a civic space," he adds. For Tom the importance of detail and variety in the planting is a moral imperative. "We know from research that attachment [to nature and place] is much stronger with variety. Increasingly, I can't stand bland minimalism," he says.

This, in part, is why Katy has been charged with planting 60,000 bulbs, including swathes of tulips – in honour of the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, one of England's oldest florist societies – and from spring onwards the garden endlessly shifts. What starts off as a cascade of bulbs with white daffodils and tulips, becomes blossom on the trees, such as *Malus* 'Evereste', and then moves on to perennials, which start off bright and zesty with golden achilleas and the lime-green zing of euphorbias, moving into more painterly phases with pink shifts, such as the *Echinacea pallida* with the ▷

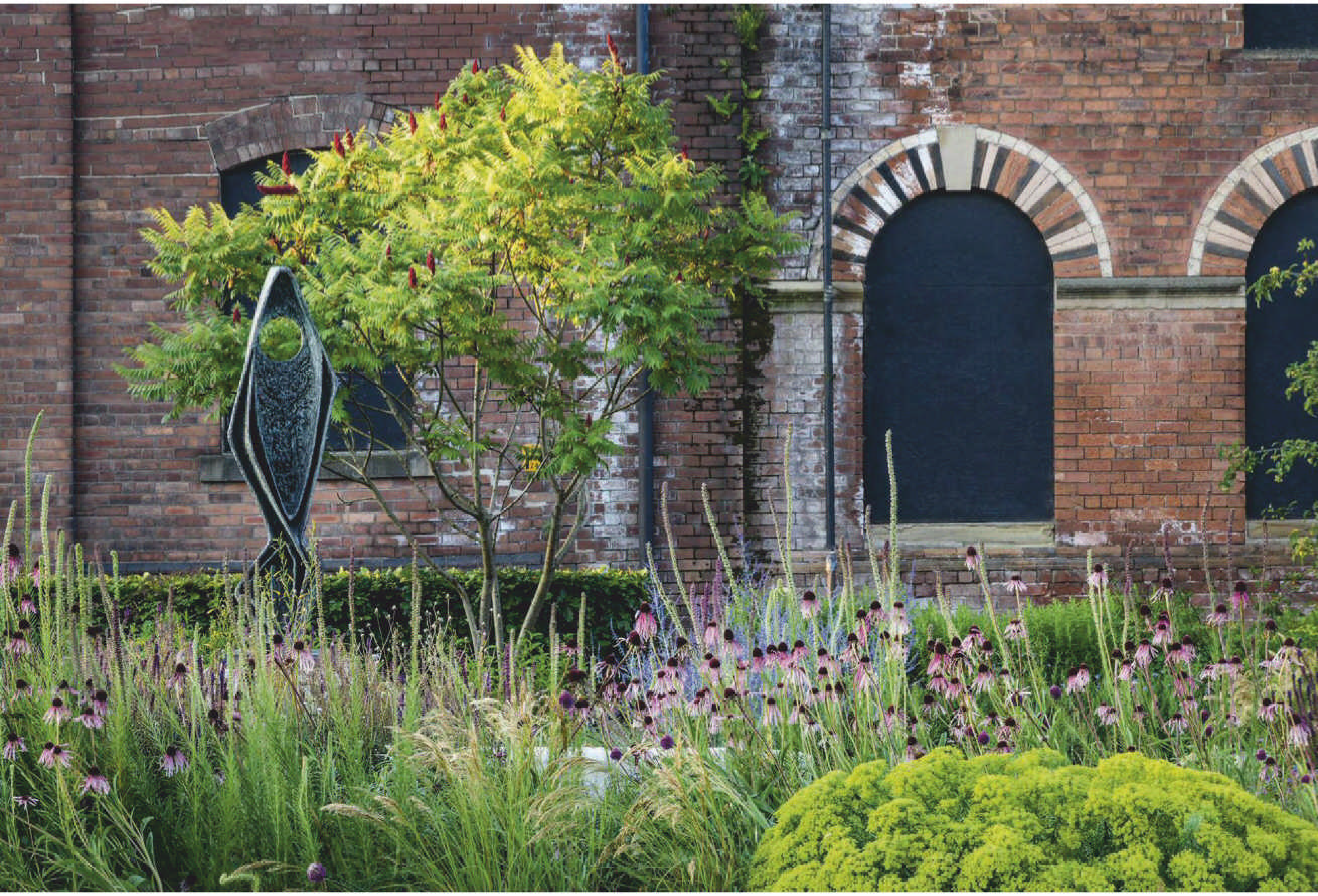
To continue turn to page 43

Katy has been charged with planting 60,000 bulbs, including swathes of tulips and from spring onwards the garden endlessly shifts

The perennials start off bright and zesty with golden achilleas and the lime-green zing of euphorbias, moving into more painterly phases with pink shifts



Liatris pycnostachya rise above *Salvia* 'Blue Spire' (formerly *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire') combining with the yellow of *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold' as if waving hello to the pink coneflowers, *Echinacea pallida*. Behind these is the 4.4m wall surrounded by the towering pin oaks, (*Quercus palustris*). The sculptures are *Pitchfork (Yellow)*, 2013, by Sir Michael Craig-Martin and *The Three*, 2017, by Rebecca Warren.



▷ almost neon lift of *Liatris pycnostachya*. The garden is very flat and these certainly add height. "The liatris are such a character, almost like a comedy element," says Katy. "Children love them." In autumn, the garden mellows to the russets and browns of asters and grasses and the fiery oranges, rust reds and bronzes of the crab apples and pin oak.

"I think because the garden is linked to the gallery, they play off each other, and people come out and start to see the sculptural quality of the plants. Barbara Hepworth really believed in having her sculpture outside," says Katy. The interplay between the light, art, concrete and planting comes together beautifully in this brave and generous garden. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION
Address. The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 5AW.
Tel 01924 247360.
Website hepworthwakefield.org
Open Garden open daily.

Find out more about Tom's work at **tomstuartsmith.co.uk**

Cultural gardener Katy Merrington is leading a *Gardens Illustrated* Masterclass on How to Make a Year-Round Flower Garden on 31 March 2021 at 6pm. Tickets cost £15. For more information and details of how to book visit gardensillustrated.com/masterclass

Facing page In spring the white of the blossom of *Malus* 'Evereste' and daffodils 'Thalia' and 'Toto' is offset by a sea of blue *Omphalodes cappadocica* 'Cherry Ingram', the purple and white *Tulipa* 'Rems Favourite' and orange *T.* 'Ballerina'.

Above The red brick walls of the old Rutland Mills highlight the intensity of the summer green foliage of the *Fagus sylvatica* hedge and the foliage of the *Rhus typhina* that shades the sculpture *Ascending Form (Gloria)*. Across the path *Liatris pycnostachya* adds height to a mix of *Stipa calamagrostis*, *Echinacea pallida* and *Euphorbia seguieriana*.

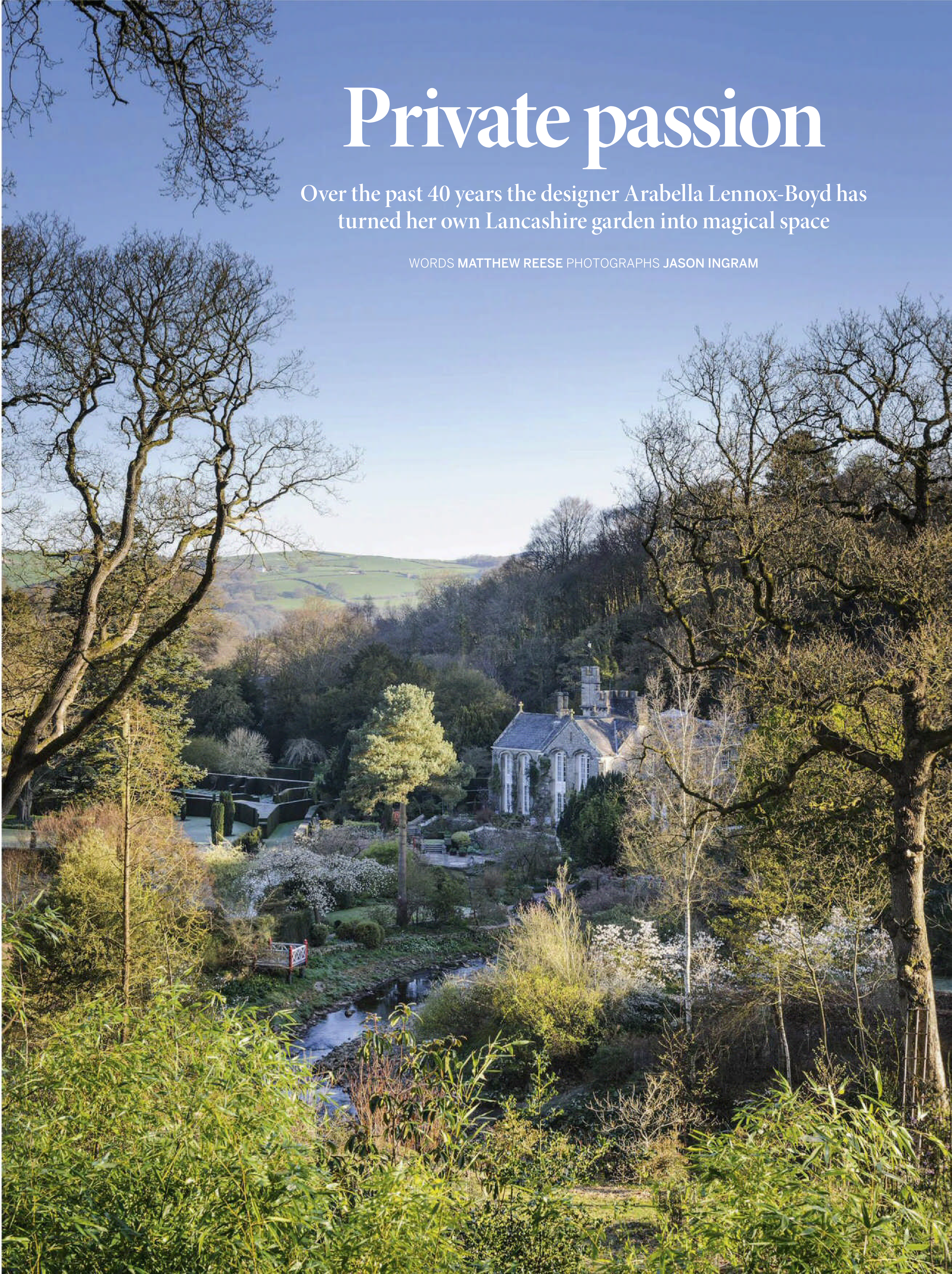
Because the garden is linked to the gallery, they play off each other, and people come out and start to see the sculptural quality of the plants

IN BRIEF

Name Gresgarth Hall.
What Home to designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd, with formal areas blending into woodland and arboretum.
Where Lancashire.
Size Ten acres.
Soil Acid to neutral, woodland and alluvial soils.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

This image *Camellia* x *williamsii* 'Mary Phoebe Taylor' with large, pink semi-double flowers backed by wonderful, lustrous and dark evergreen foliage, is one of many calcifuges that thrive in the humus-rich soils of Gresgarth's woodland areas.

Facing page Gresgarth Hall sits at the mouth of a wooded valley, with the brook Artle Beck drawing a sweeping curve as it rushes past the house. Dark yew hedges stamp formality near the house and echo the stone walls etched on the hills beyond.



Private passion

Over the past 40 years the designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd has turned her own Lancashire garden into magical space

WORDS **MATTHEW REESE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

As you draw closer to the countryside beyond the garden, the plantings continue to feel more naturalistic and less formal

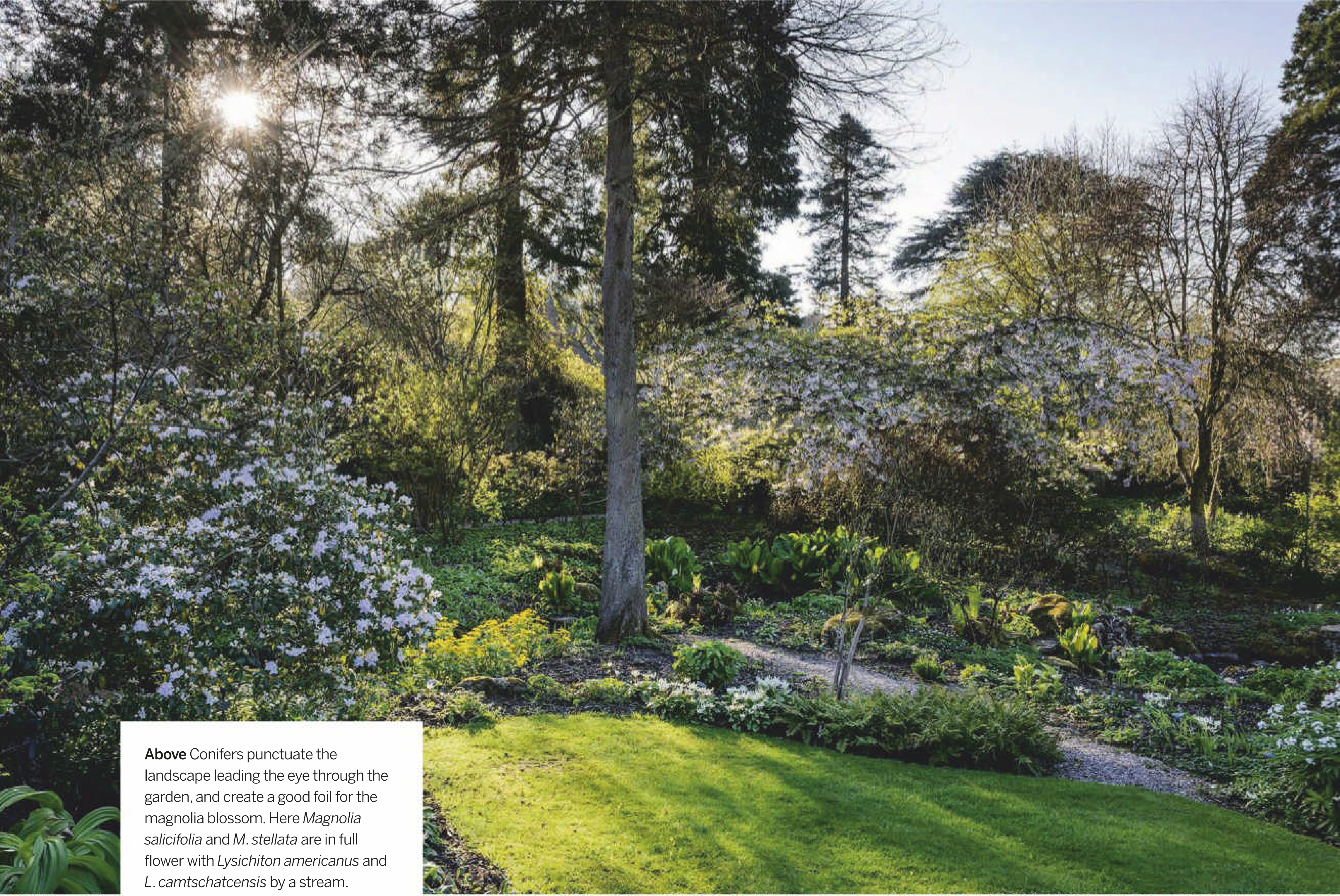
Deep within the rugged Lancashire countryside is Gresgarth Hall, the country home of the inspirational landscape designer and plant collector, Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd. Over the past 40 years, she has transformed the land at Gresgarth into a wonderfully romantic garden.

When she arrived in 1979, there was practically no garden, and the space was neglected and overgrown. Clumsy lumps of sombre evergreen rhododendron and laurel hemmed the house in rather harshly from the surrounding countryside and completely obliterated any views. “It took a bit of time to get used to this garden,” she says. Having grown up on an Italian hillside she was more accustomed to views that stretched for miles. Trees were felled, evergreens removed, and the woodland was pushed back from the house to make space for a garden, and to open views from the house across the river and into the woods beyond. This necessary clearing did, however, reveal the garden to the prevailing west wind. “It was one of my first concerns,” says Arabella. “How to slow the wind from coming in and hitting the hills, eddying and causing damage to the garden.” So hedges were planted for protection, but these also presented an opportunity to divide the garden up into different spaces. Large borders with clipped trees, beautiful double herbaceous borders and stone terraces were laid out closer to the house where she wanted more formality.

Yew hedging frames these borders, and the different areas of the garden are linked via intimate paths. Where the paths intersect, small circles of yew have been planted and are draped with wisteria, displays Arabella describes as “little theatres”. The paths eventually lead to the kitchen garden, working areas, and a Chatsworth-inspired wavy corridor of beech hedging. Arabella has carefully managed the design to take full advantage of an existing lake and a brook, Artle Beck, that runs through the garden ▷

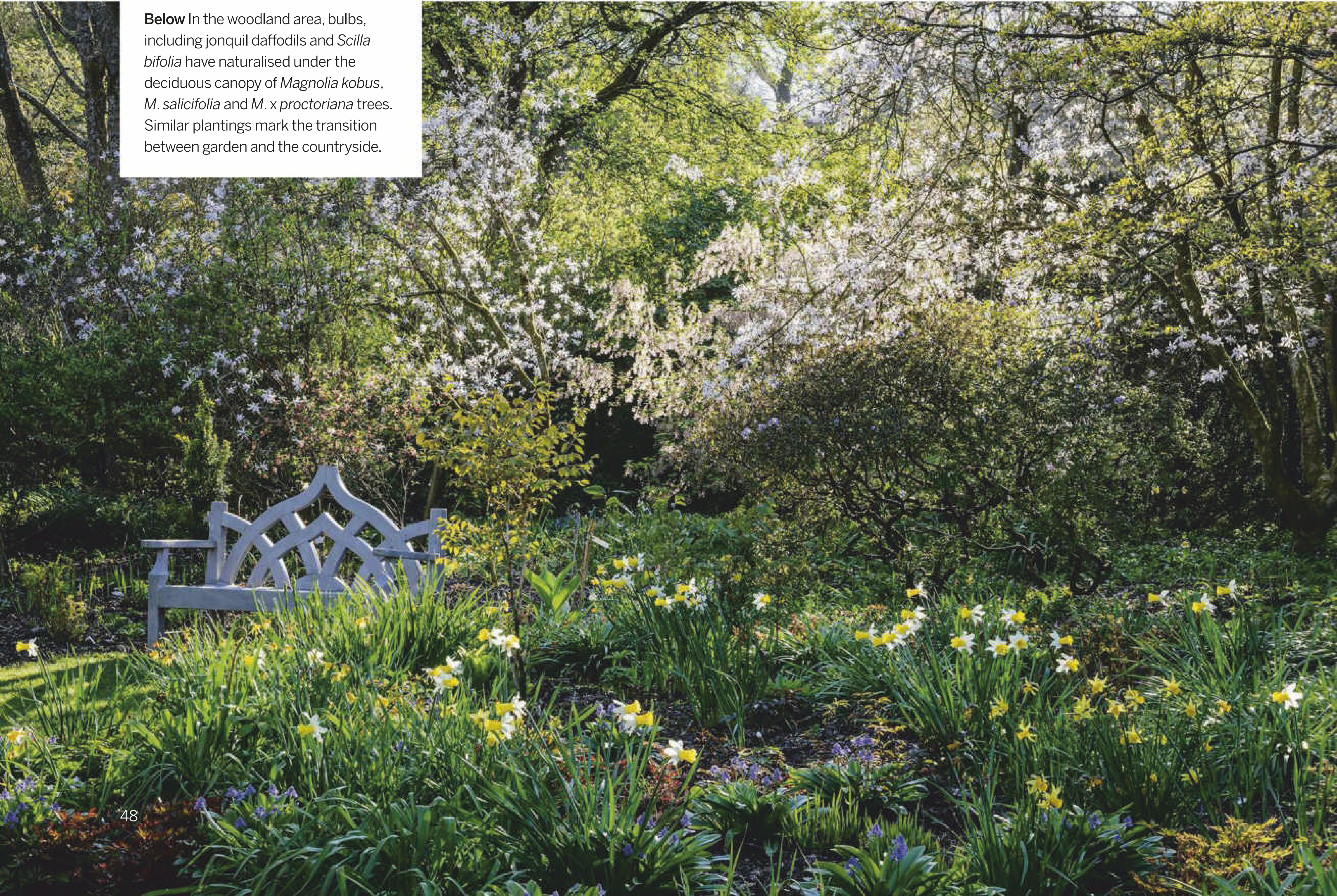
To continue turn to page 51

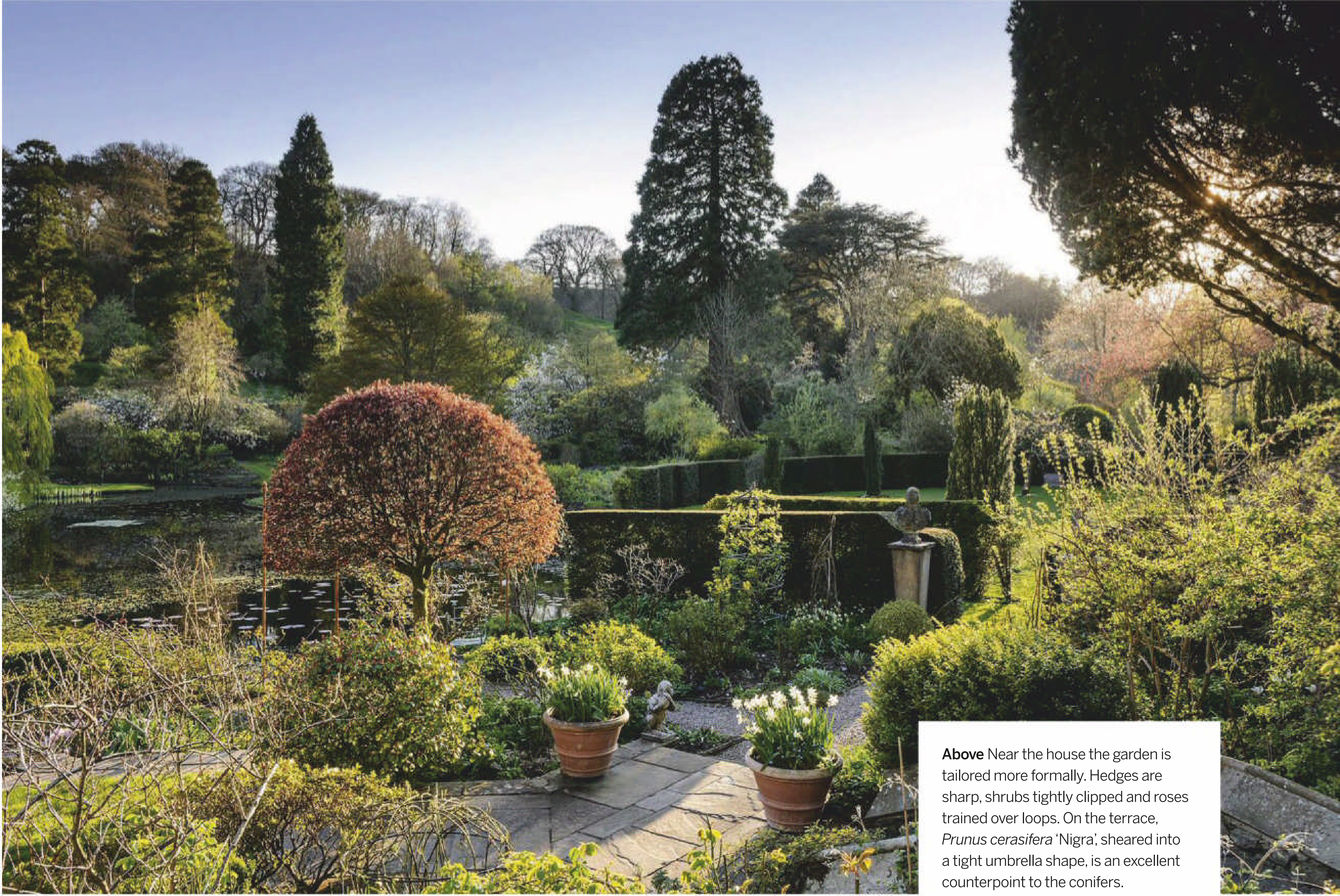
This cherry walk is planted with the great white cherry, *Prunus* ‘Tai-haku’. It has a spreading habit and casts long branches full of pendent white blossom over the patches of predominantly white-flowered daffodils in the meadow. This area of the garden is set back from the house, and nearing the boundary the planting is more relaxed.



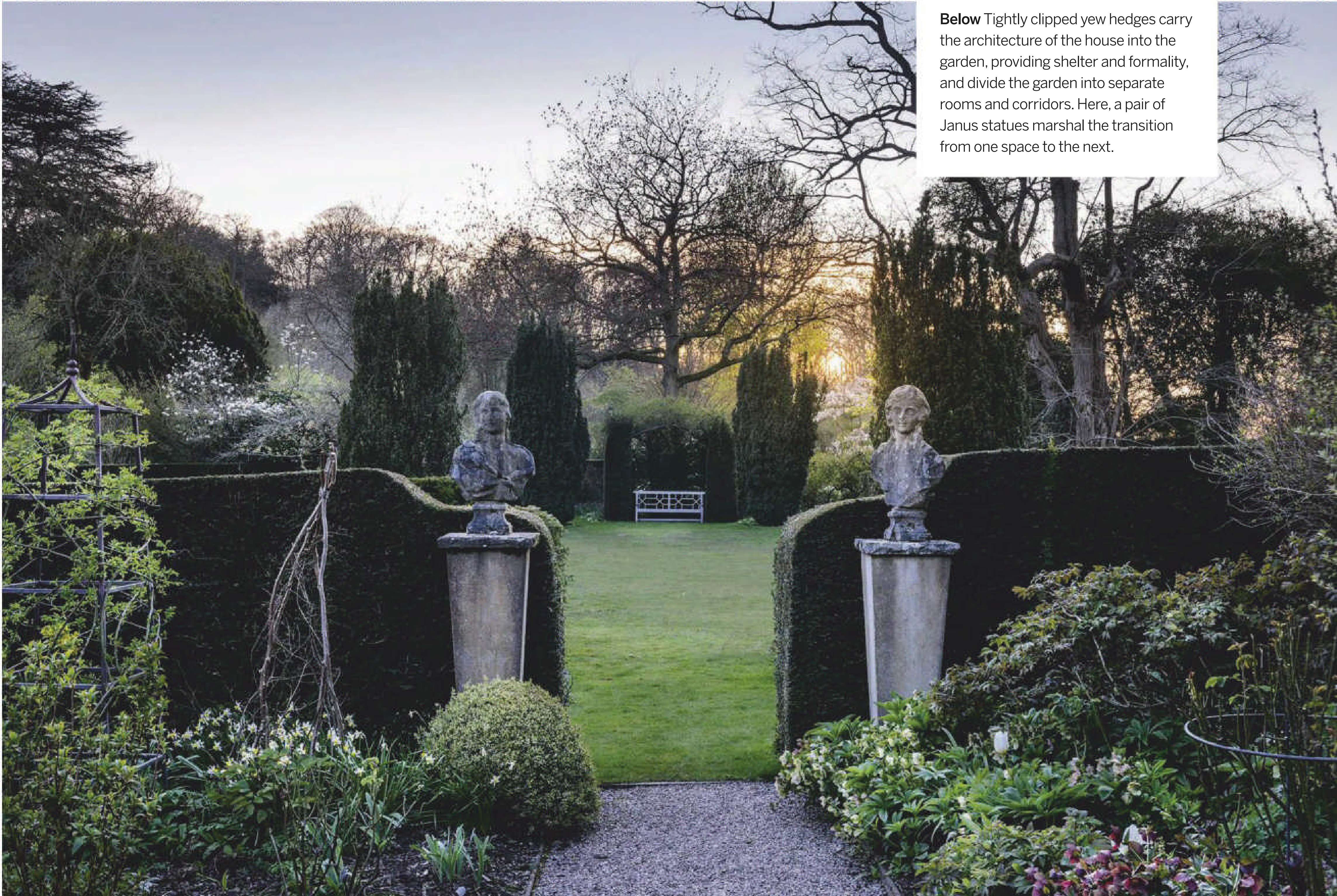
Above Conifers punctuate the landscape leading the eye through the garden, and create a good foil for the magnolia blossom. Here *Magnolia salicifolia* and *M. stellata* are in full flower with *Lysichiton americanus* and *L. camtschatcensis* by a stream.

Below In the woodland area, bulbs, including jonquil daffodils and *Scilla bifolia* have naturalised under the deciduous canopy of *Magnolia kobus*, *M. salicifolia* and *M.* x *proctoriana* trees. Similar plantings mark the transition between garden and the countryside.

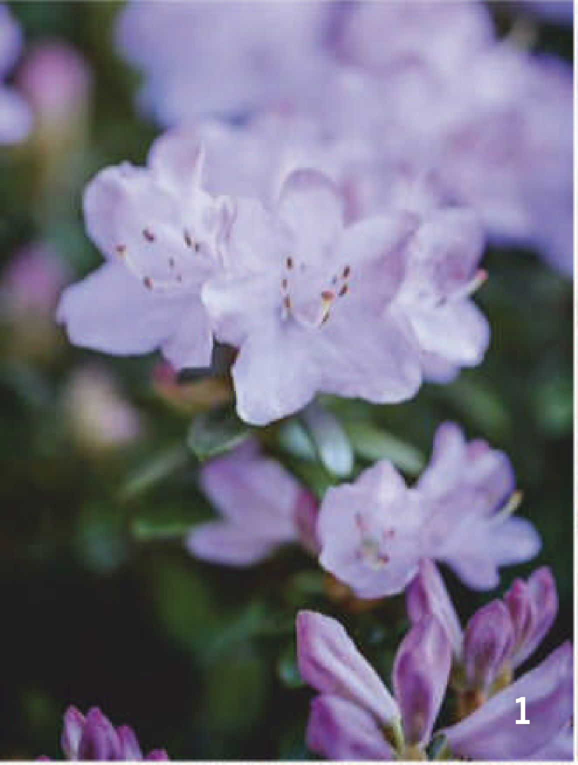




Above Near the house the garden is tailored more formally. Hedges are sharp, shrubs tightly clipped and roses trained over loops. On the terrace, *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra', sheared into a tight umbrella shape, is an excellent counterpoint to the conifers.



Below Tightly clipped yew hedges carry the architecture of the house into the garden, providing shelter and formality, and divide the garden into separate rooms and corridors. Here, a pair of Janus statues marshal the transition from one space to the next.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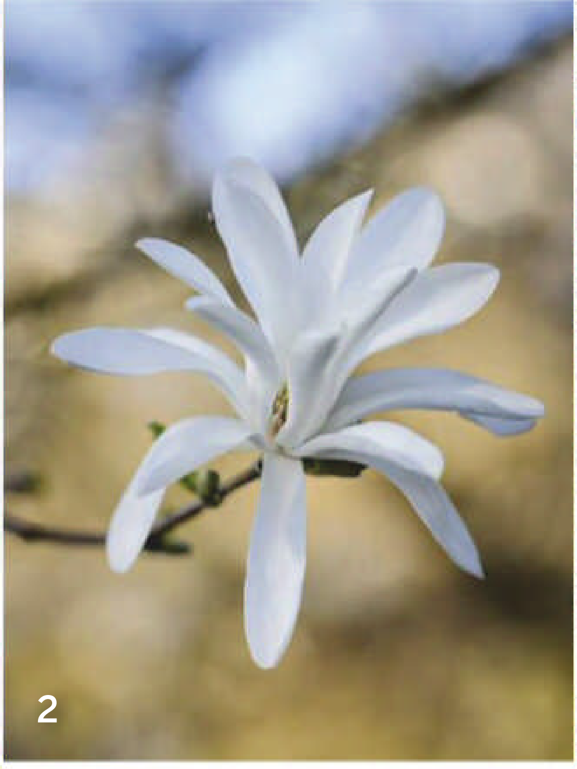
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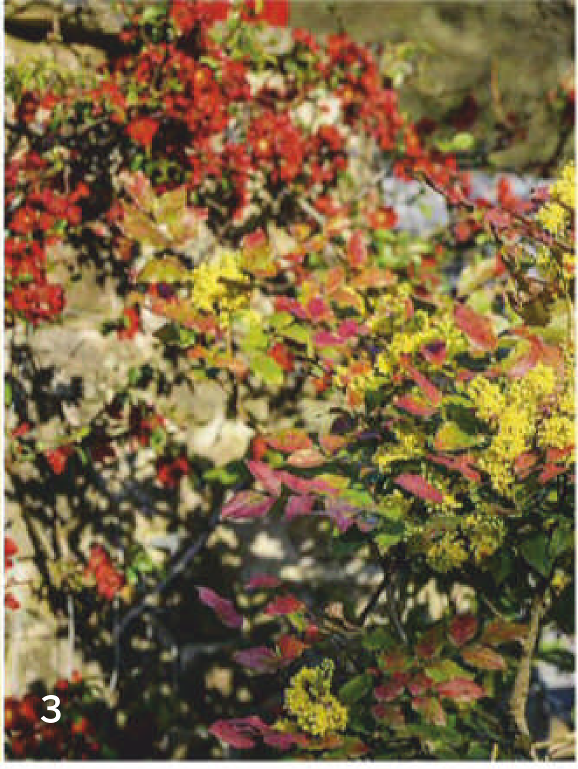
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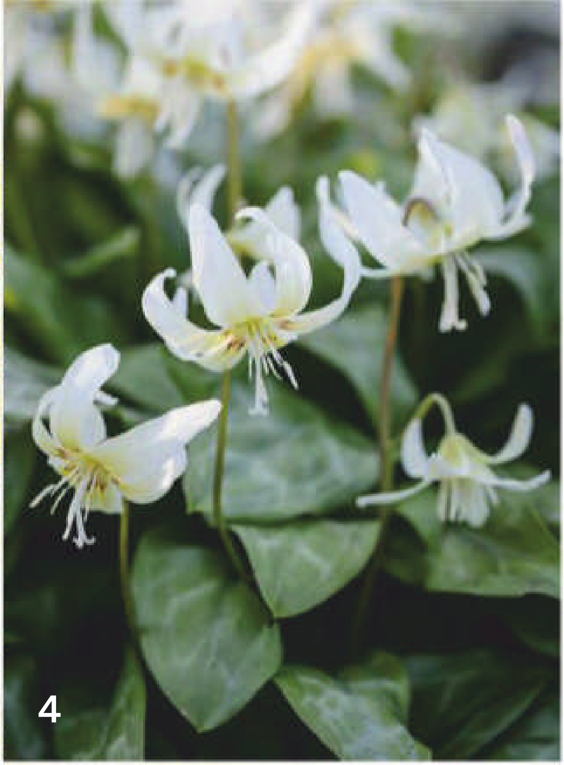
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Rhododendron yunnanense* One of several rhododendrons grown in the woodlands. A very garden-worthy rhododendron, it makes a large, semi-deciduous shrub, which is smothered in soft pink blooms in May. Plant in groups for spectacular effect. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b†.

2 *Magnolia stellata* An excellent and very floriferous magnolia that is ideal for smaller gardens. It forms a small, shrubby tree that is covered in pure-white flowers from head to toe before the foliage is produced. 3m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Mahonia aquifolium* A tough, evergreen shrub that spreads slowly via suckers. It makes a springy mass of polished, prickly, pinnate foliage that can often turn red in winter. Yellow flowers are produced in spring. 1.2m. RHS H5, USDA 5A-8b.

4 *Erythronium californicum* 'White Beauty' A very popular and easily cultivated hybrid trout lily. It increases quickly in the garden, making clumps of lustrous mottled leaves and white Turk's cap flowers with yellow centres. 30cm. AGM*. RHS H5.

5 *Narcissus* 'White Lady' This old florist's daffodil has long stems topped with sweetly scented blooms, each with white silky petals and a small yellow cup. It is a beautiful perennial daffodil for meadow planting. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Scilla liliohyacinthus* The Pyrenean squill is a lively self-sowing bulb for the flower garden. It quickly makes carpets of green foliage, and lavender-blue flowers are produced in the spring. 25cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

7 *Magnolia* 'Star Wars' A recent and excellent cross between *M. campbellii* and *M. liliiflora*. It grows into a smallish tree and produces masses of pink flowers in spring just before the foliage emerges. 6m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Tulipa* 'Ronaldo' A triumph tulip that is suitable for the border, containers or for cutting and is very weather resistant. The burgundy-coloured flowers are held just proud of the foliage from April to May. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

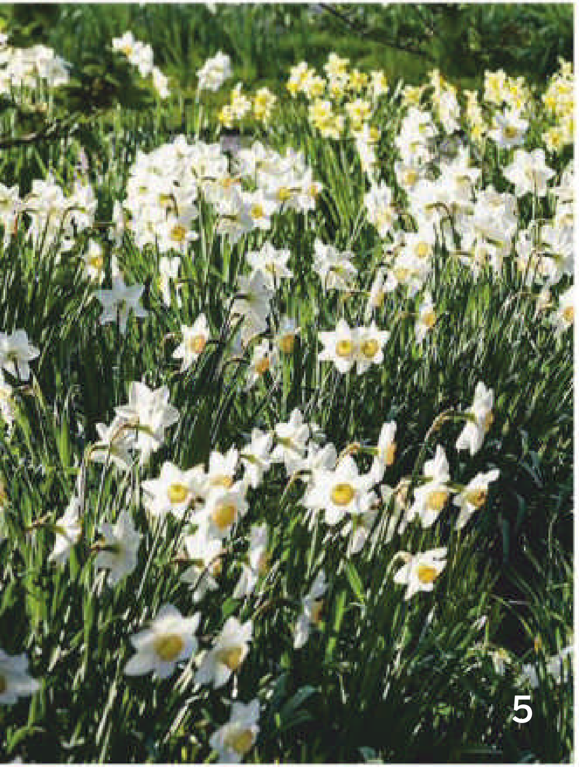
9 *Rhododendron fastigiatum* A good dwarf rhododendron for the front of a border. It forms low mounds of evergreen blue-green foliage, atop which trusses of amethyst-blue flowers are produced in profusion. 1m. RHS H6.

10 *Prunus* 'Shirotae' A particularly beautiful Japanese cherry that has a spreading habit. It produces white, fragrant, single or semi-double blooms held in drooping clusters in spring. 3-4m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

11 *Cardamine heptaphylla* A choice early flowering woodlander that makes slowly creeping clumps of fresh-green foliage topped with loose sprays of clear-white flowers. Provide moist and humus-rich soil. 30-45cm. RHS H7.

12 *Prunus* 'Tai-haku' The tree better known as the great white cherry makes a decent-sized tree and will flower exuberantly, throwing masses of large, white flowers over the whole tree in the spring. 12m. AGM. RHS H6.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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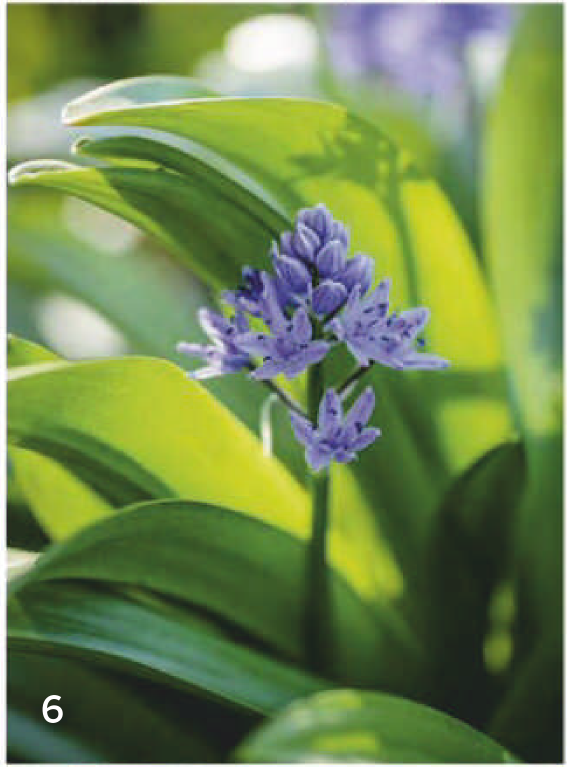
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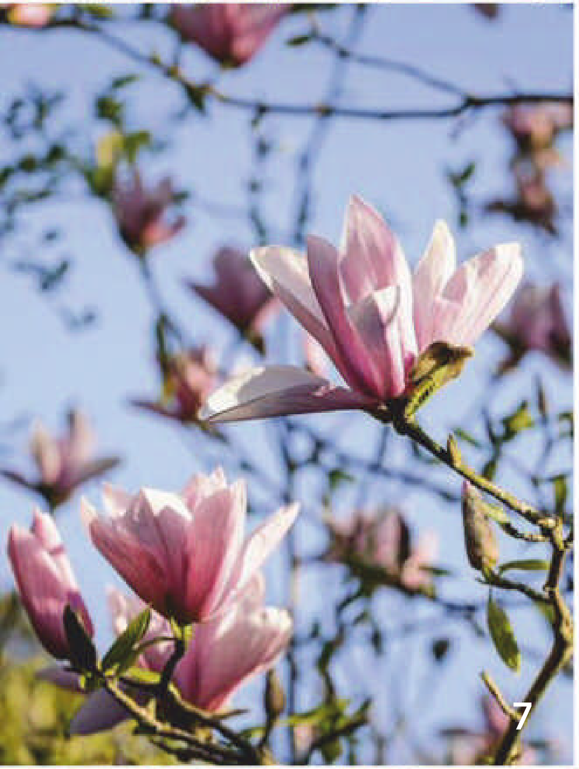
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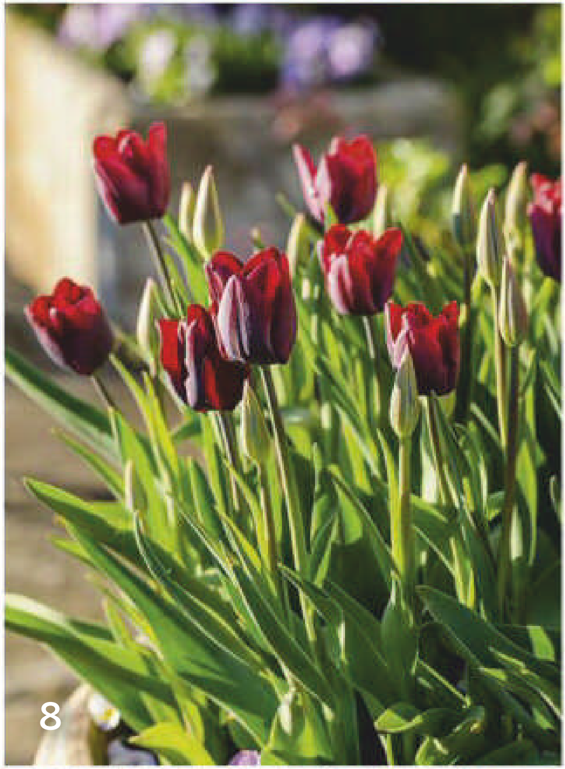
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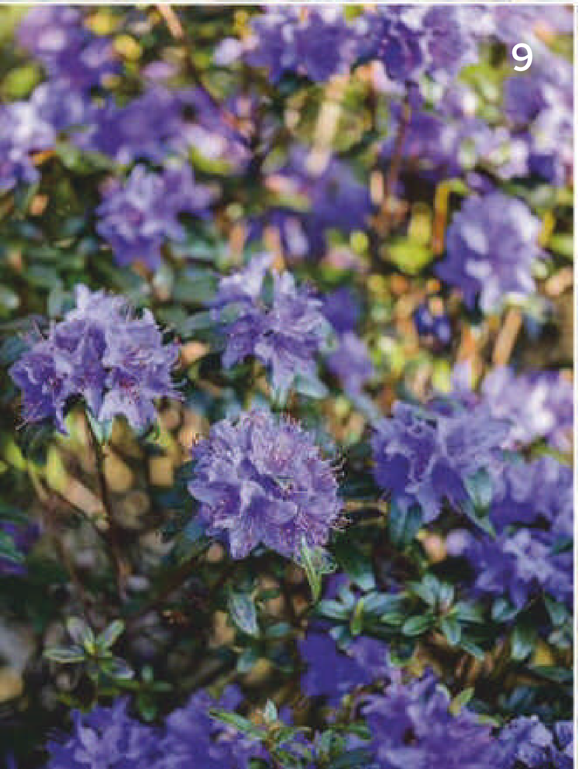
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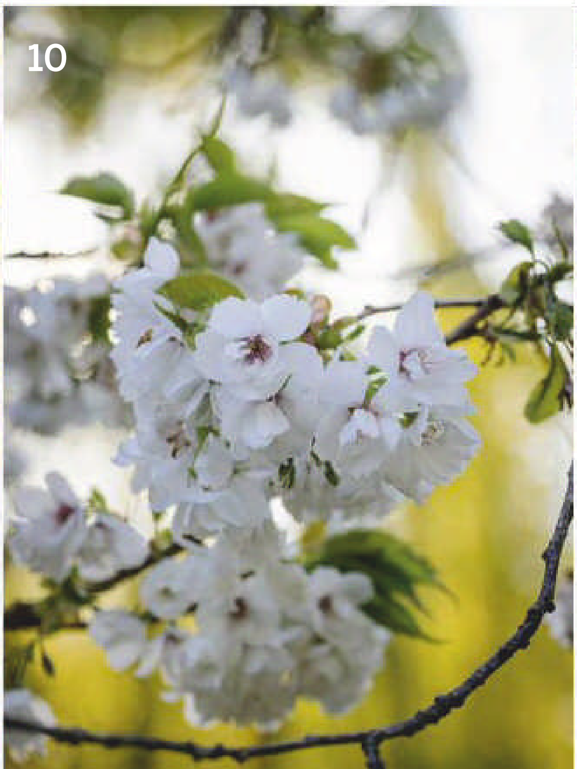
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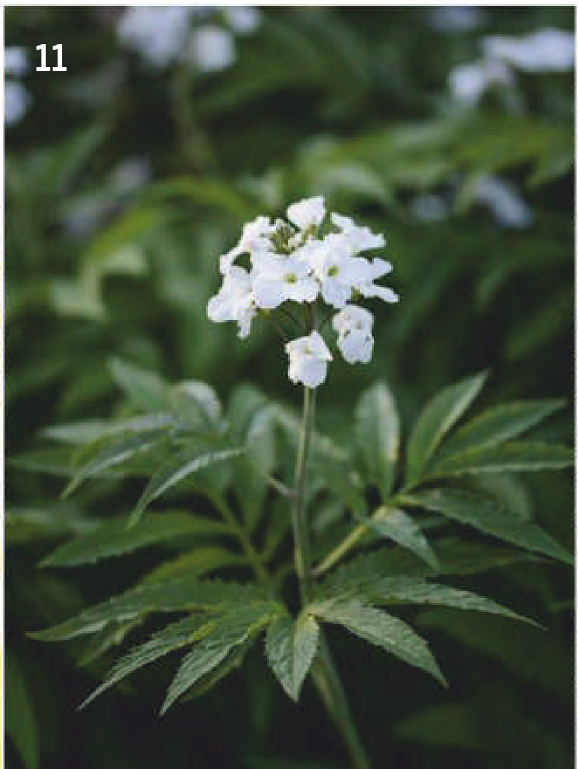
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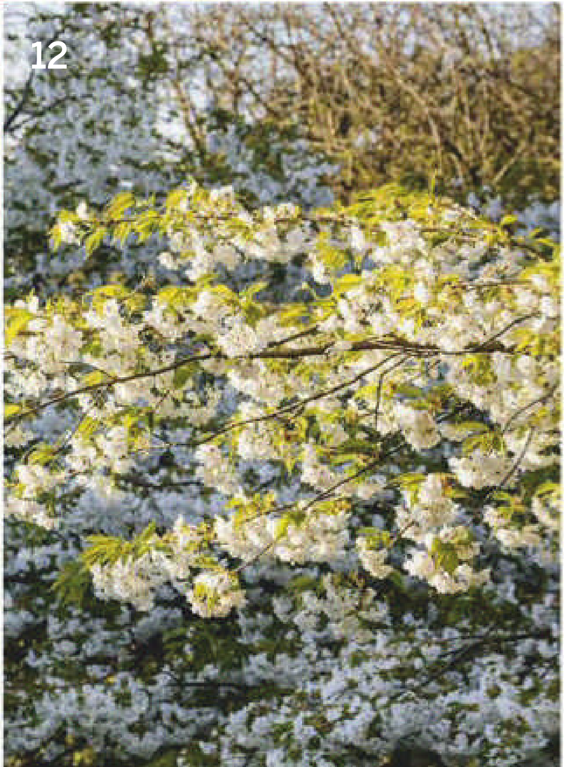
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▷ and creates a magical atmosphere. The lake was much smaller when she arrived at Gresgarth. “I wanted to create the feeling the river was flooding this area, even though it is actually much lower, so we enlarged it by three to four times the original size,” says Arabella. The still water reaches the house terrace and is a picture of reflections, of the white blossom of a *Prunus* ‘Shirotae’ that spreads above the water and a weeping katsura tree. The Artle Beck, by contrast, is noisy and playful and the sound reverberates through the garden. Yew buttresses are lined out equidistantly on both banks and gently firm the garden around the brook.

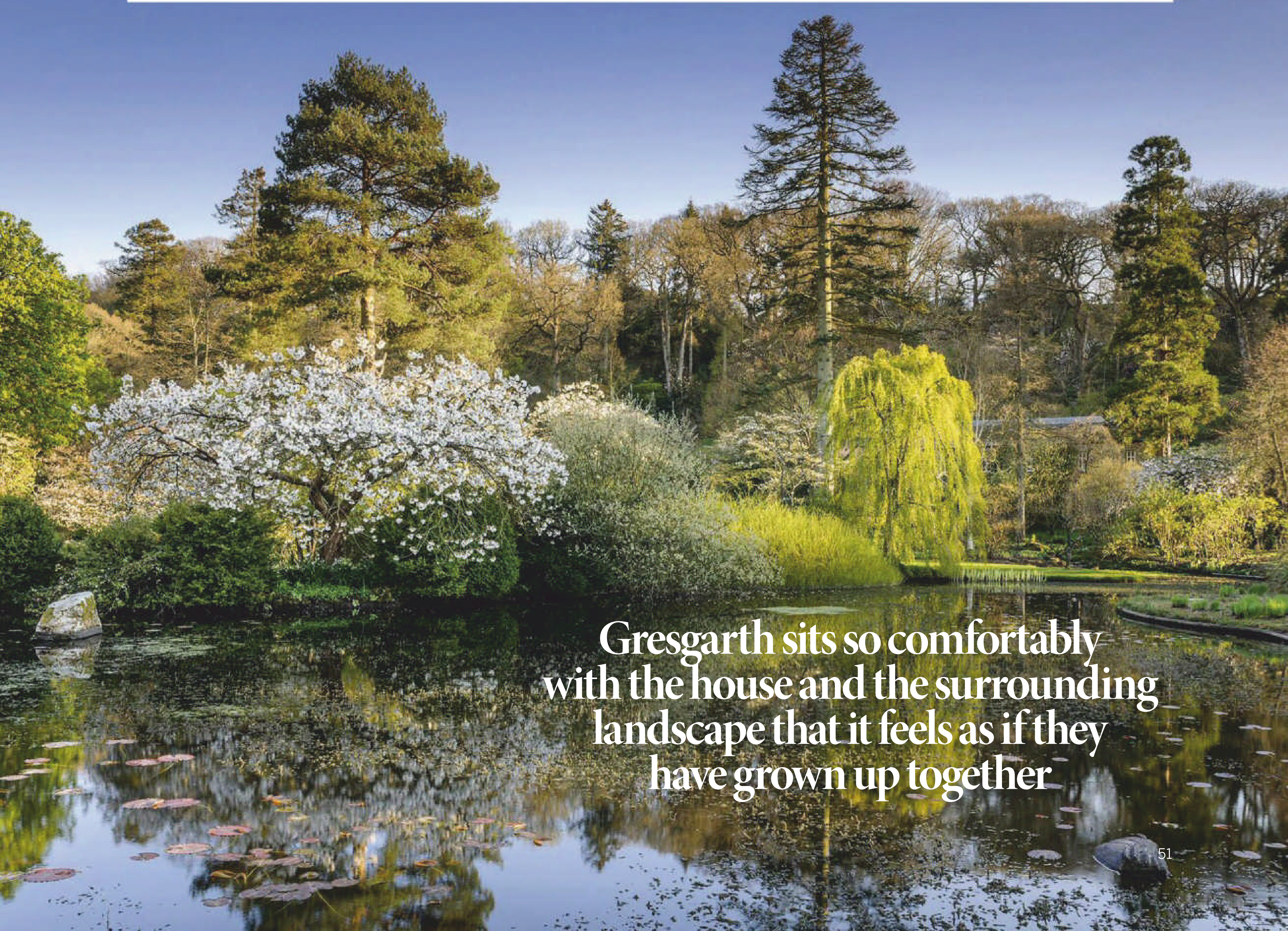
The garden continued to grow quite organically, but carefully. Arabella went on to develop a more formal open lawn area that features a very old *Robinia pseudoacacia* with wonderful fissured bark that acts as a host for different types of epiphytes. This area has a different atmosphere from the more complex plantings nearby and is enclosed by more yew hedging that forms a semi-circular boundary. On the slopes of the valley ascending from the Artle Beck, the garden becomes much more natural, and it is here that Arabella has created a world-class arboretum of rare and special plants, including a thriving collection of 200 magnolias. Drifts of *Daphne bholua* (grown from seed at Gresgarth), swathes of cherries, and rhododendrons all flourish under her watchful eye. The arboretum is also home to Gresgarth’s National Collection of plants from the Styracaceae family.

As you draw closer to the countryside beyond the garden, the curved lines of the hedging and the plantings continue to feel more naturalistic and less formal. On the western edge is The Wild Garden, with big borders of trees and shrubs that help to shelter the garden from damaging wind and create a link to the countryside. Despite the extensive work that has gone into creating the garden at Gresgarth, it sits so comfortably with the house and the surrounding landscape that it feels as though it should have always been that way – as if they have grown up together. Arabella has created a truly magnificent garden, and one could quite happily wander for many hours enraptured and captivated by the enchanting atmosphere. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Gresgarth Hall, Caton, Lancashire LA2 9NB. **Tel** 01524 771 838 **Web** arabellalennoxboyd.com **Open** Most years the garden is open on the first Sunday of every month, from February to November, 11am-5pm (3pm in winter). Check website for this year’s opening times.

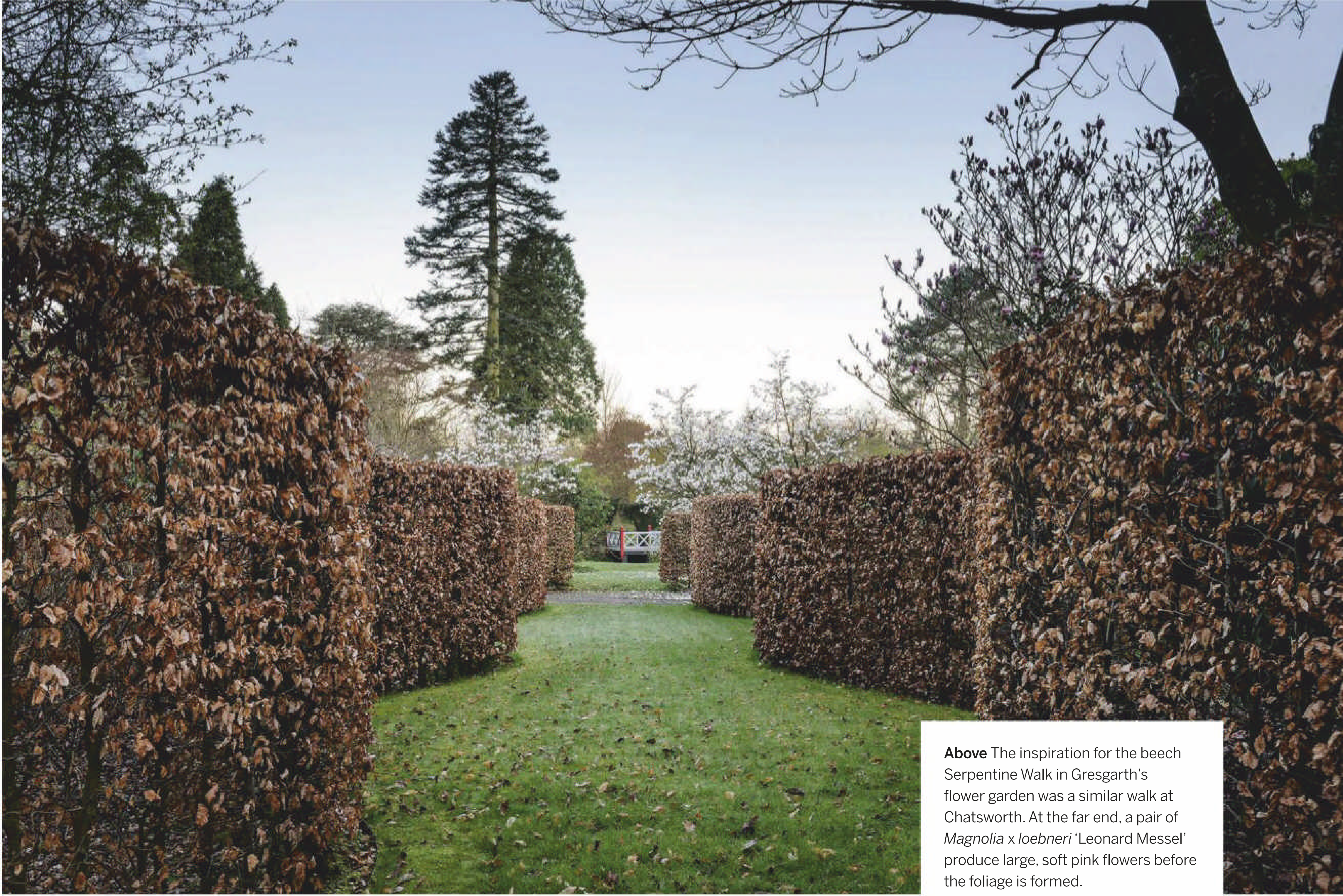
In the spring the different shapes of trees and shrubs stand out, and here they are caught beautifully in the reflection of the lake. The weeping katsura is particularly striking with its coat of new yellow-green foliage, which is as pretty as any flower, and nearby *Prunus* ‘Shirotae’ is full of white blossom.



Gresgarth sits so comfortably with the house and the surrounding landscape that it feels as if they have grown up together

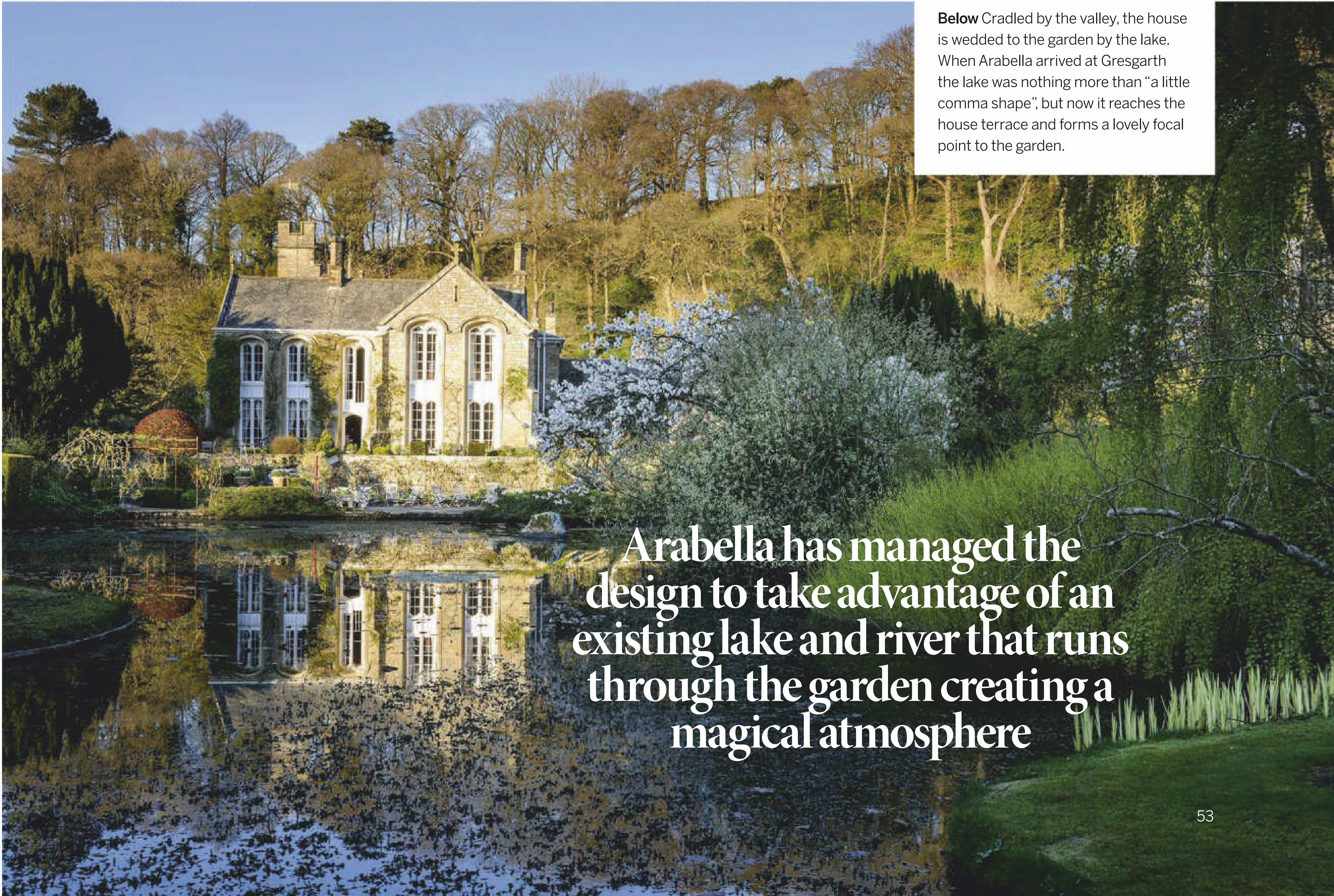
Above A multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii* creates shade alongside the brook Artle Beck. Its delicate white blossom is much finer in flower than the cherry, and it thrives in the wet acid soils at Gresgarth. It also has very good autumn colour.

Below Heading away from the house, the gardening is more restrained and relaxed – here wildflowers and native oaks mingle with Arabella's collections of rare trees. Near a disused mill, is a stand of white birch, and on the valley-side is a glade of 20 *Davidia* trees.

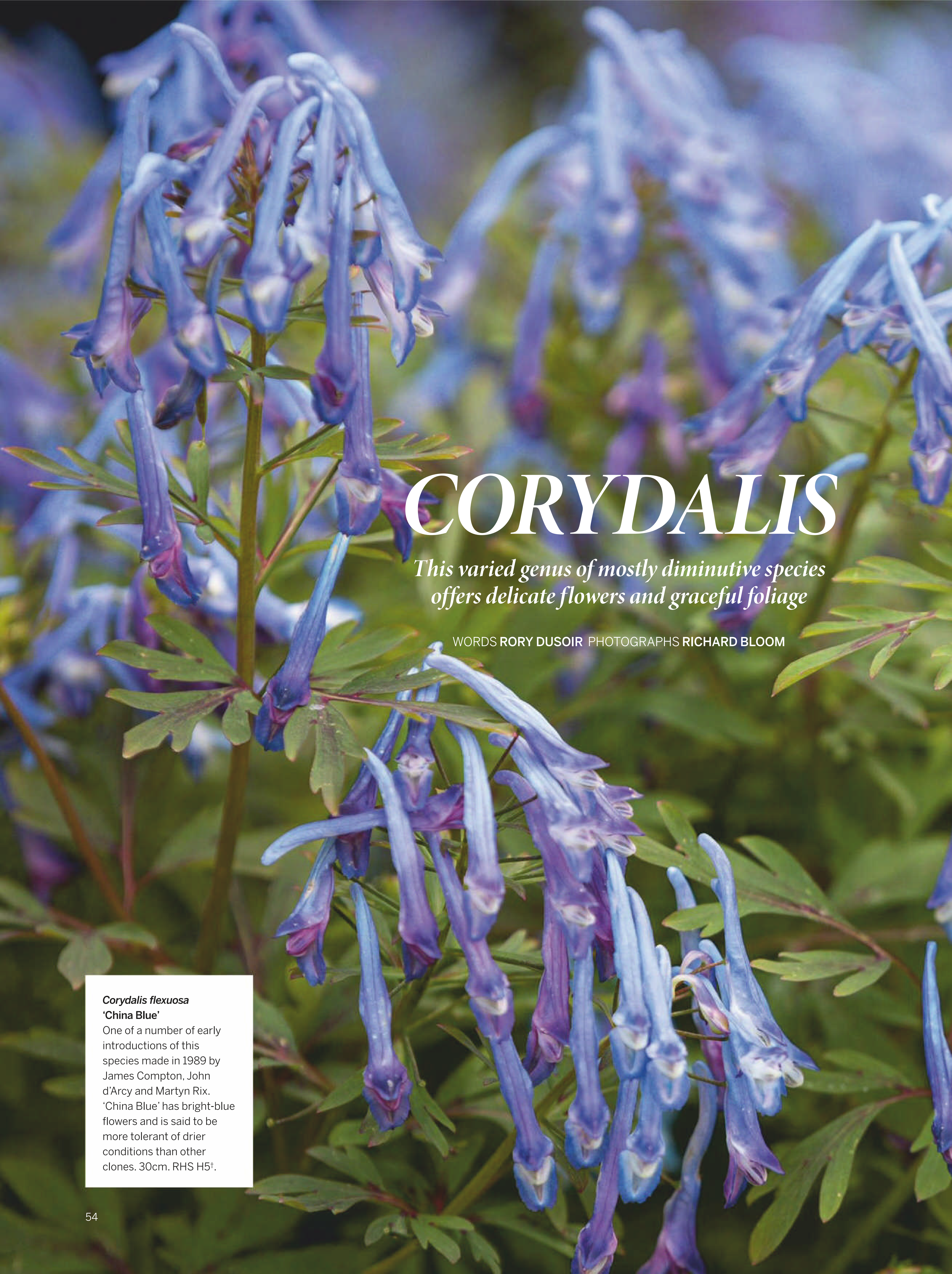


Above The inspiration for the beech Serpentine Walk in Gresgarth's flower garden was a similar walk at Chatsworth. At the far end, a pair of *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' produce large, soft pink flowers before the foliage is formed.

Below Cradled by the valley, the house is wedded to the garden by the lake. When Arabella arrived at Gresgarth the lake was nothing more than "a little comma shape", but now it reaches the house terrace and forms a lovely focal point to the garden.



Arabella has managed the design to take advantage of an existing lake and river that runs through the garden creating a magical atmosphere



CORYDALIS

This varied genus of mostly diminutive species offers delicate flowers and graceful foliage

WORDS **RORY DUSOIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

***Corydalis flexuosa* 'China Blue'**
One of a number of early introductions of this species made in 1989 by James Compton, John d'Arcy and Martyn Rix. 'China Blue' has bright-blue flowers and is said to be more tolerant of drier conditions than other clones. 30cm. RHS H5†.

The genus *Corydalis* belongs in the same botanical family as poppies, the Papaveraceae. Its closer allies within that family include the bleeding hearts (*Dicentra*, *Lamprocapnos* and *Dactylicapnos*) and the fumitories (*Fumaria*). While these once formed their own family, the closer alignment of these genera within the Papaveraceae is still recognised and sees them placed in their own sub-family, the Fumarioideae. Although the group was named for *Fumaria*, reflecting the European bias of earlier botanists, the most important genus in terms of numbers of species and broadness of distribution is now known to be *Corydalis*.

The genus is a treasure trove of diminutive, jewel-like species, the vast majority of which reside in China and Tibet. There are some taller species, such as American *Corydalis scouleri*, which can grow to 1m, and Central Asian *Corydalis nobilis*, but most of the species grown in gardens will not exceed 30cm. *Corydalis* has been known to Western botany since the Classical period and became of particular interest to apothecaries. *Corydalis cava* contains poisonous alkaloids that in small quantities were used to treat ailments, both in humans and cattle. But the real richness of the genus was not revealed to the West until China was opened up to botanical exploration; of 450 species in total, 330 are native to China and Tibet.

Fairly recent introductions from China's species-rich Sichuan province have propelled the covetousness of gardeners to new levels. In particular the various forms of *Corydalis flexuosa* brought into cultivation from the mid 1980s onwards lent the genus a new lustre. This species offers flowers in various shades of a rare electric blue and its arrival on our shores coincided nicely with a burgeoning interest in growing 'choice' woodland plants. The barrier to growing it successfully in the UK can be summed up nicely with those familiar three words expressing its soil requirements – 'moist, but well-drained'. The species will not tolerate water-logging in winter, nor excessive heat and drought in summer. But the difficulties should not be exaggerated and while it might feel most at home within the UK in western Scotland, the species is well within the grasp of keen gardeners even in southern England. Its beautiful hybrid with *Corydalis omeiana*, known as *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue' is said to be even more robust.

Conversely, the tuberous species will thrive in the comparatively dry summer conditions common to southeast England. *Corydalis solida* and *Corydalis cava* can be described as bomb-proof on any reasonably well-drained soil. Their summer dormancy renders them immune, respectively, to a summer baking in exposed conditions or to a summer of darkness under a deciduous canopy. Both species, and especially *Corydalis solida*, are variable in colour and engagingly promiscuous. Un-named *Corydalis solida* clones tend to flower in a wishy-washy purple, but selections such as 'Beth Evans' and 'George Baker' offer clear, strong colours. Once acquired they will readily acquaint themselves with one another in your garden to produce your own indigenous race of colour forms. Although *Corydalis solida* presents itself with the daintiness of an alpine plant, it is not to be trusted in the rock garden. Its robust and straightforward approach to growth and reproduction make it too competitive to co-exist with neighbours of a more delicate disposition. At the Savill Garden in Windsor Great Park, there are even large drifts of this species established in meadow grass.

All *Corydalis* have intricate and graceful foliage that contributes a large part of their charm, however, some are more prized for their leaf. Woodlanders *Corydalis temulifolia* 'Chocolate Stars' and *Corydalis ophiocarpa* both have bronzy foliage that outweighs the contribution of the flowers, while *Corydalis cheilanthifolia* is another woodlander prized for its fine, ferny leaves. All in all, the genus provides a hugely varied challenge to growers and a corresponding richness of reward, with species ranging from 'weeds', to choice woodlanders and alpines. Among such treasures there are bound to be at least one or two that could find a home in your garden. ❑

• Author Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained plantsperson and garden writer. His recommendations for the best *Corydalis* can be found over the next five pages.

Brian Wickenden
Brian holds the National Collection of *Corydalis*, a collection that is made up of 97 distinct taxa including 72 different species. Most of his *Corydalis* are grown in the open ground in competition with other plants. **corydalis-collection.org.uk**

PLANT PROFILE

What A varied genus of low-growing herbaceous plants with graceful foliage and colourful flowers. A literal translation of *Corydalis* from the Greek is 'crested lark'. There is no English common name.

Origins *Corydalis* has a broad distribution throughout the Northern Hemisphere, with the vast majority hailing from western China and Tibet.

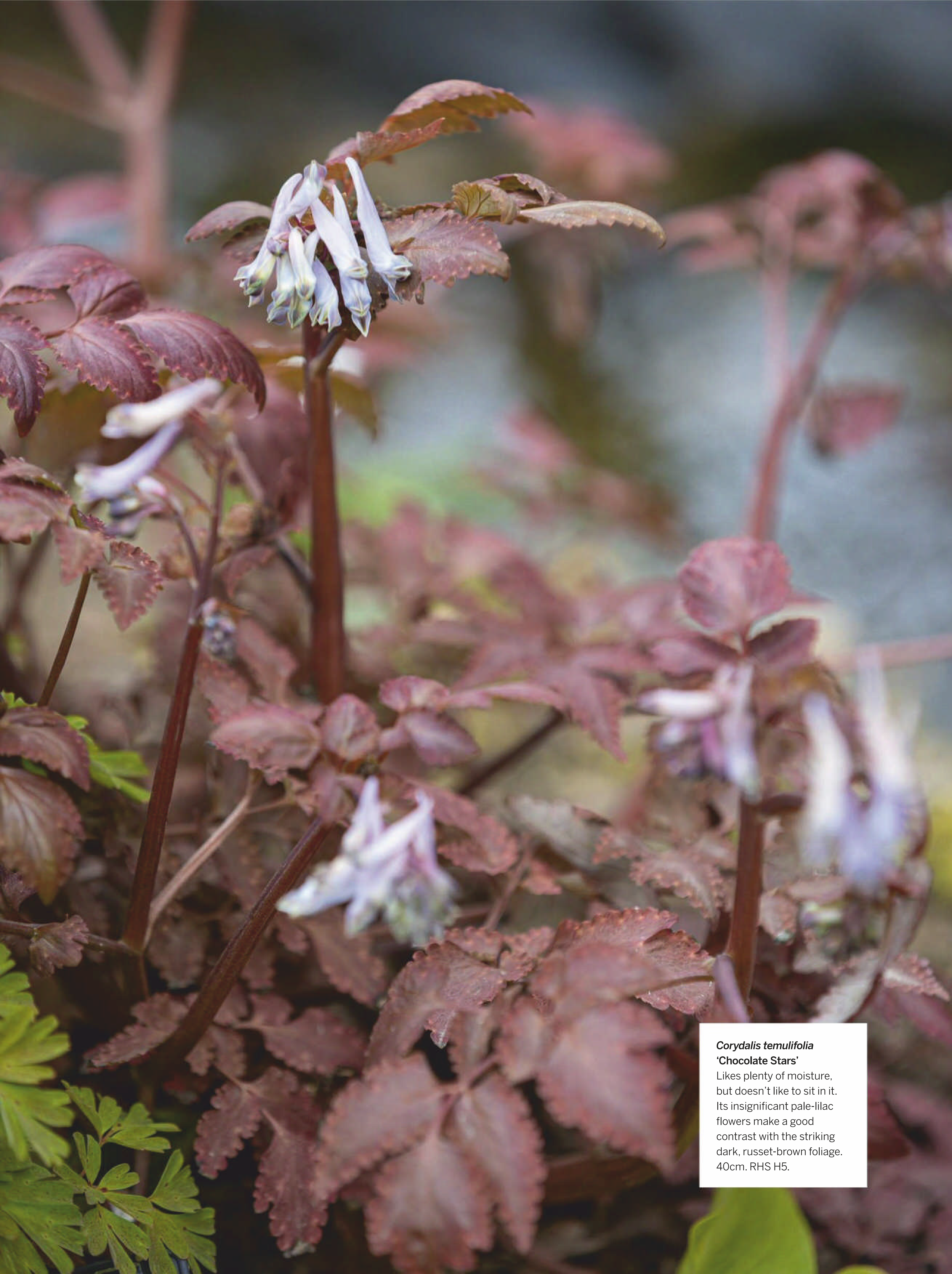
Season Most flower between spring and early summer.

Size Few exceed 30cm in height, although some can reach up to 1m. Rhizomatous species may spread indefinitely, but at a slow rate.

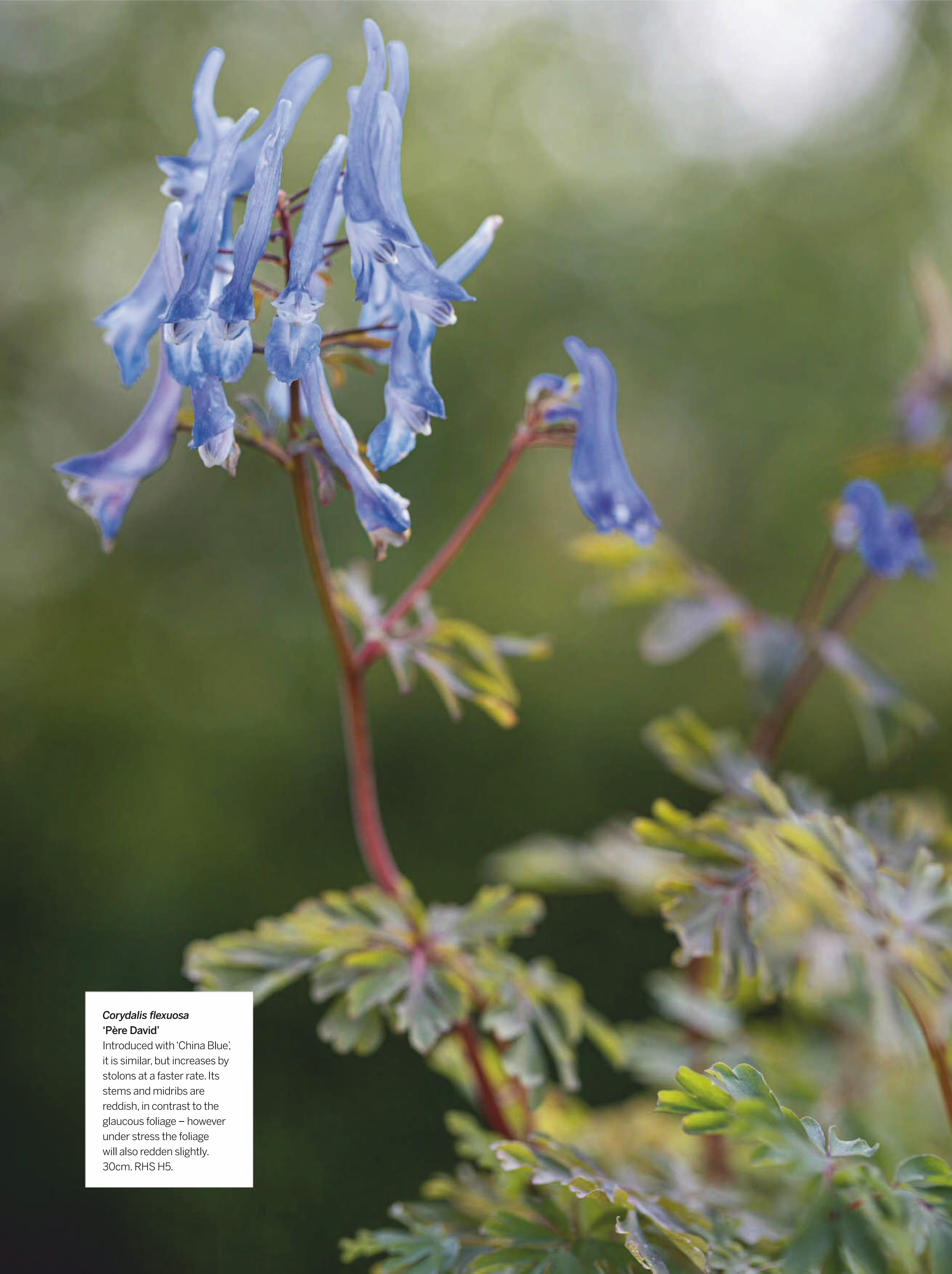
Conditions Good drainage is key, with rhizomatous woodland species sharing in addition a strong aversion to drying out. Some *Corydalis* are easily grown almost anywhere.

Hardiness Most are hardy to at least -15°C.

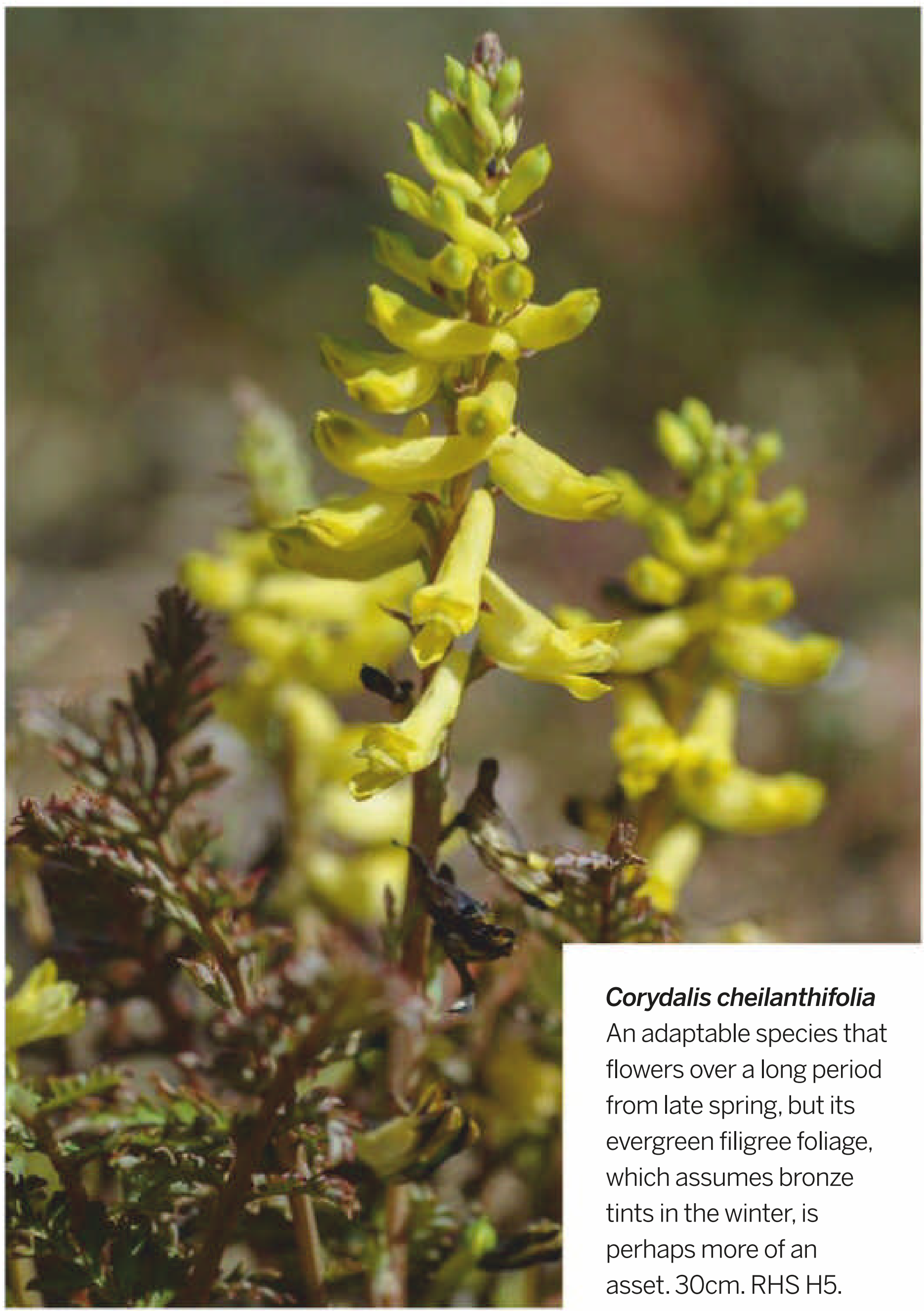
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

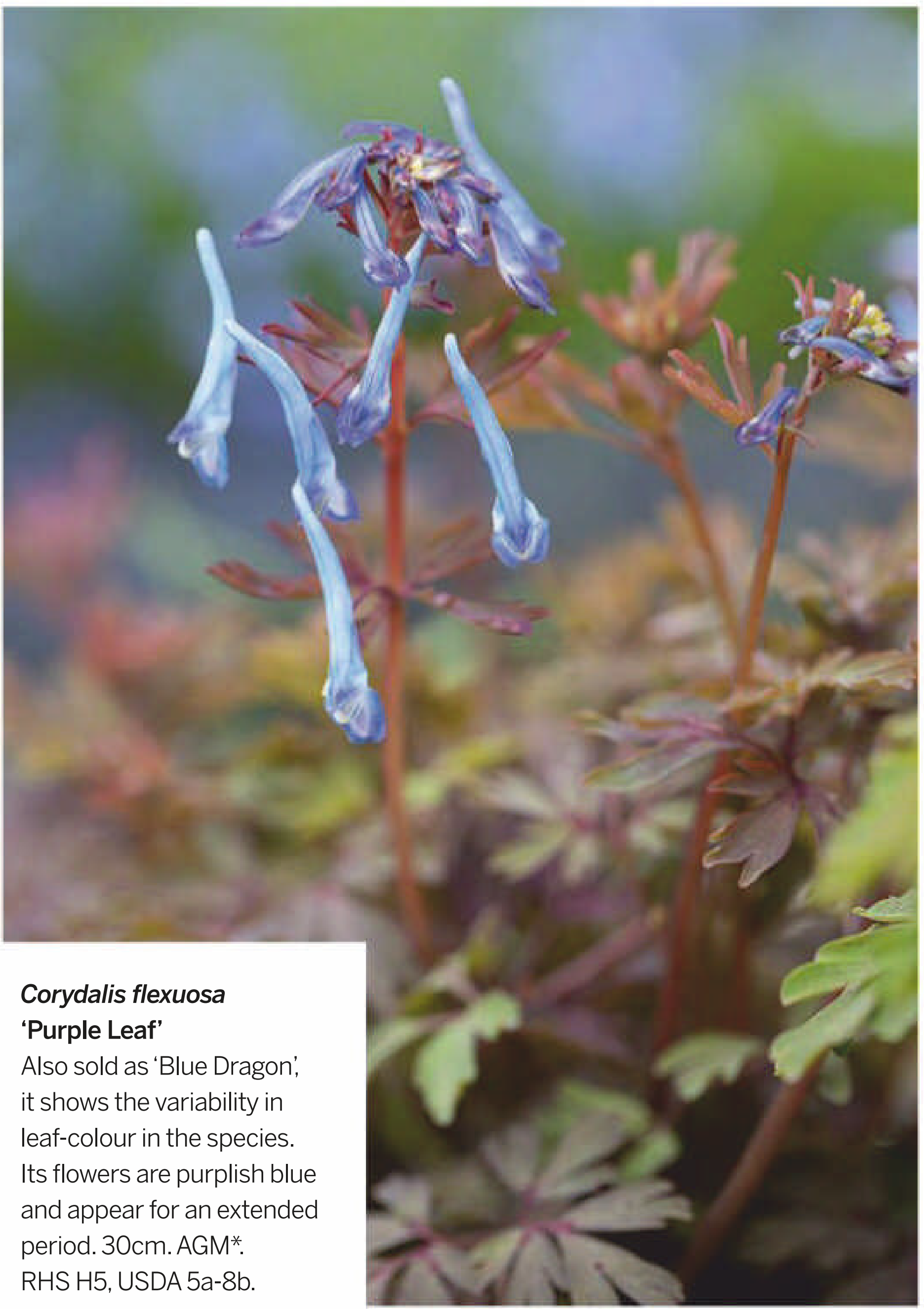


Corydalis temulifolia
'Chocolate Stars'
Likes plenty of moisture, but doesn't like to sit in it. Its insignificant pale-lilac flowers make a good contrast with the striking dark, russet-brown foliage. 40cm. RHS H5.



***Corydalis flexuosa* 'Père David'**
Introduced with 'China Blue', it is similar, but increases by stolons at a faster rate. Its stems and midribs are reddish, in contrast to the glaucous foliage – however under stress the foliage will also redden slightly. 30cm. RHS H5.



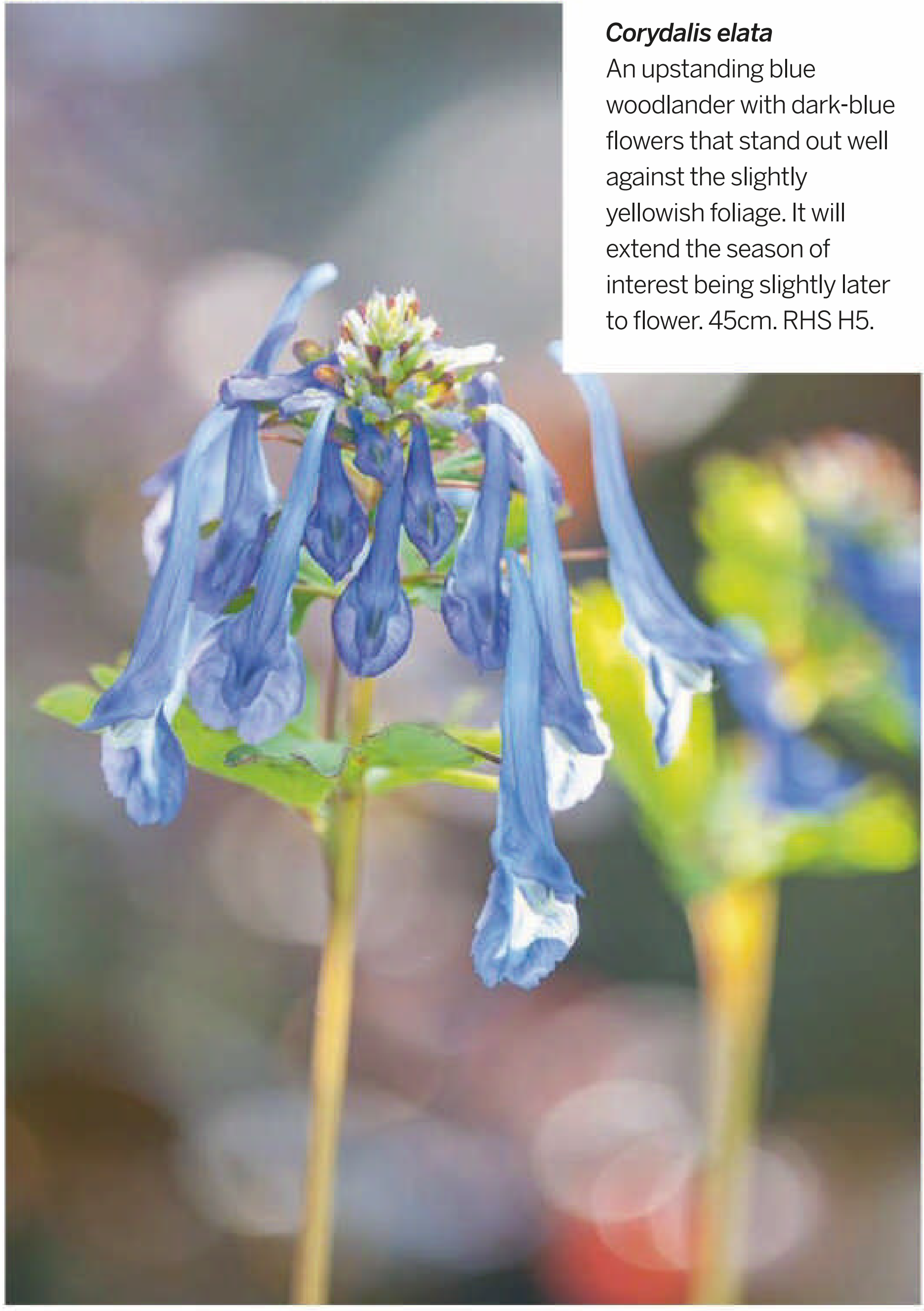


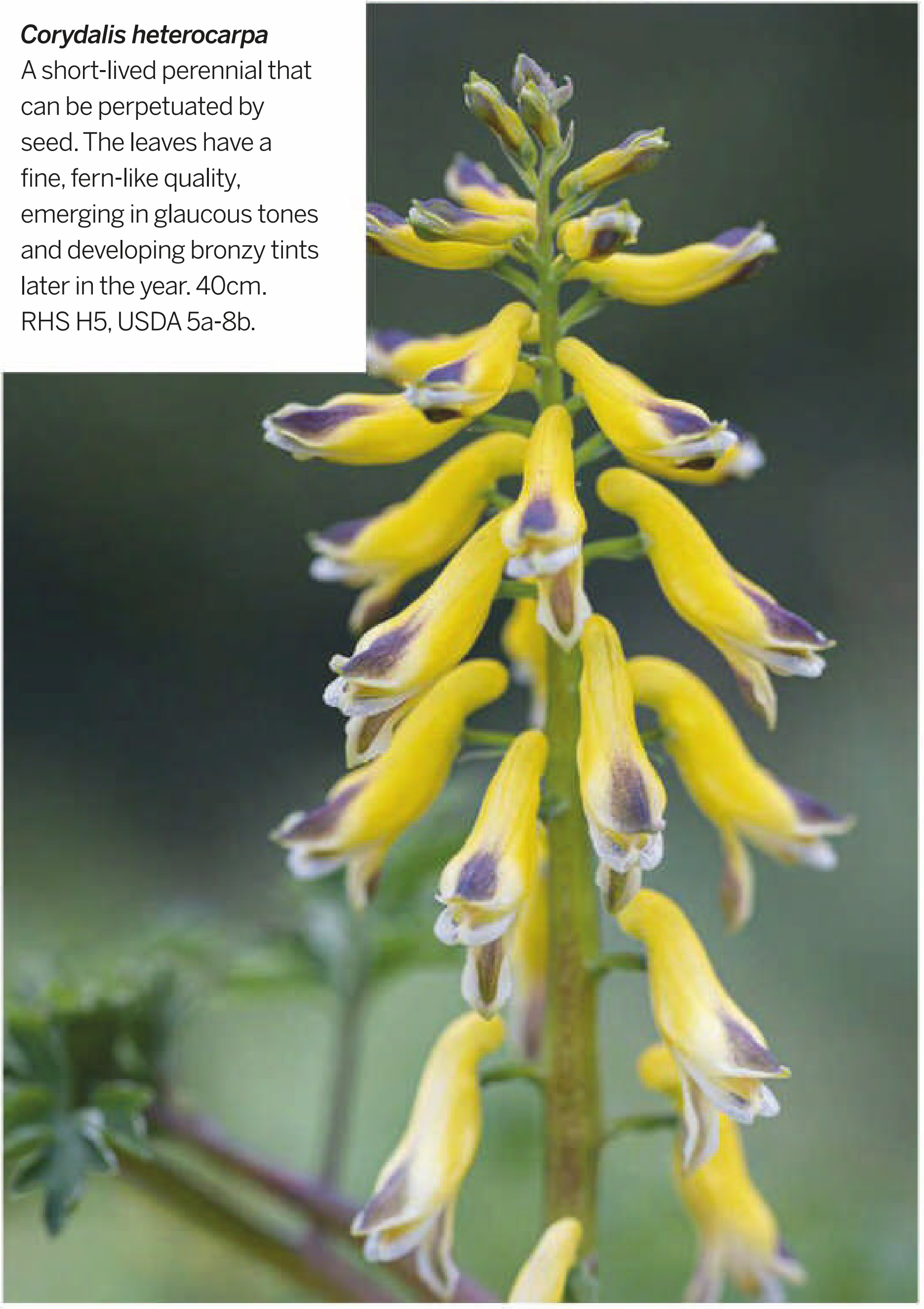
Corydalis cheilanthifolia
An adaptable species that flowers over a long period from late spring, but its evergreen filigree foliage, which assumes bronze tints in the winter, is perhaps more of an asset. 30cm. RHS H5.

Corydalis elata
An upstanding blue woodlander with dark-blue flowers that stand out well against the slightly yellowish foliage. It will extend the season of interest being slightly later to flower. 45cm. RHS H5.

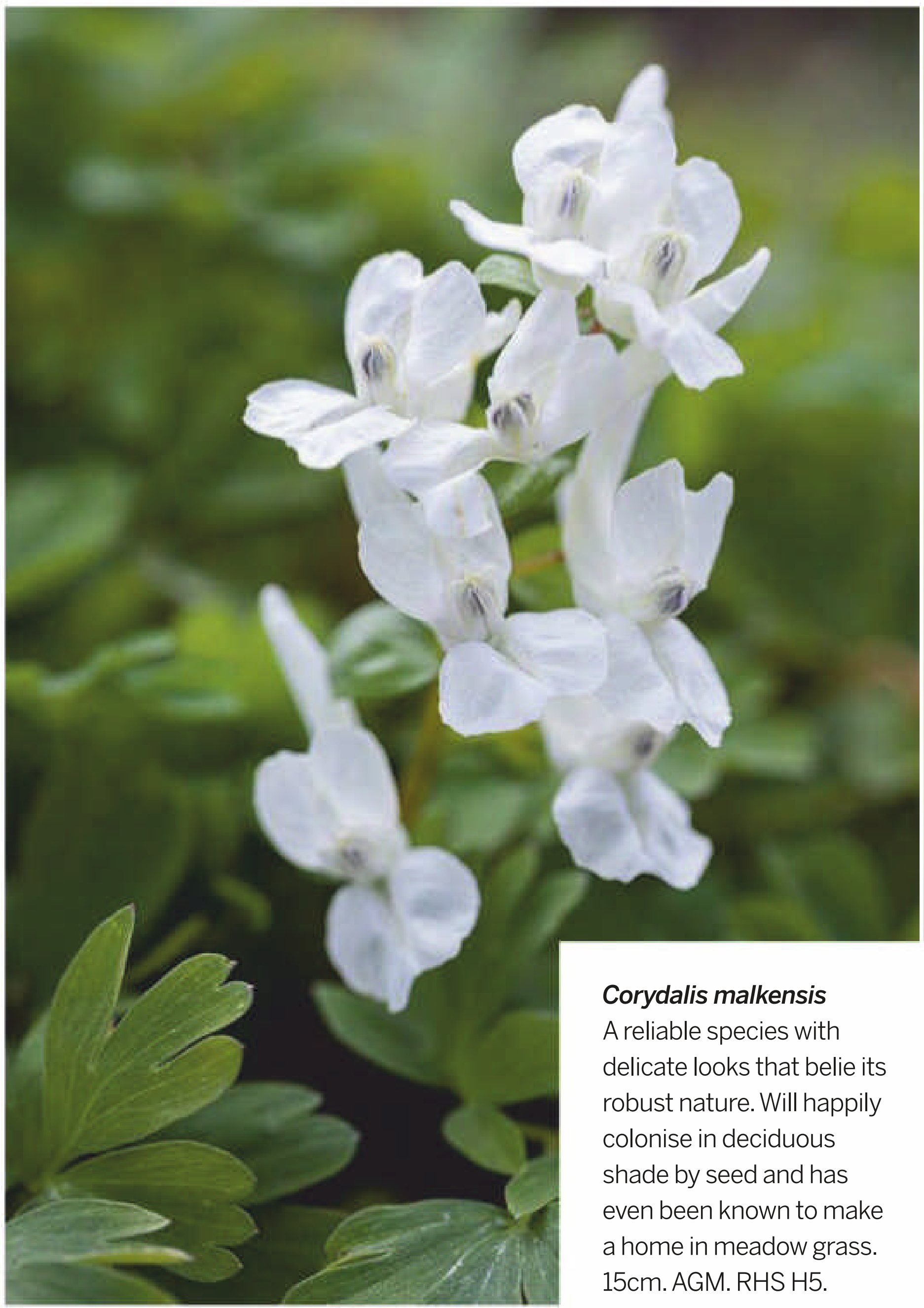
Corydalis flexuosa 'Purple Leaf'
Also sold as 'Blue Dragon', it shows the variability in leaf-colour in the species. Its flowers are purplish blue and appear for an extended period. 30cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Corydalis heterocarpa
A short-lived perennial that can be perpetuated by seed. The leaves have a fine, fern-like quality, emerging in glaucous tones and developing bronzy tints later in the year. 40cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

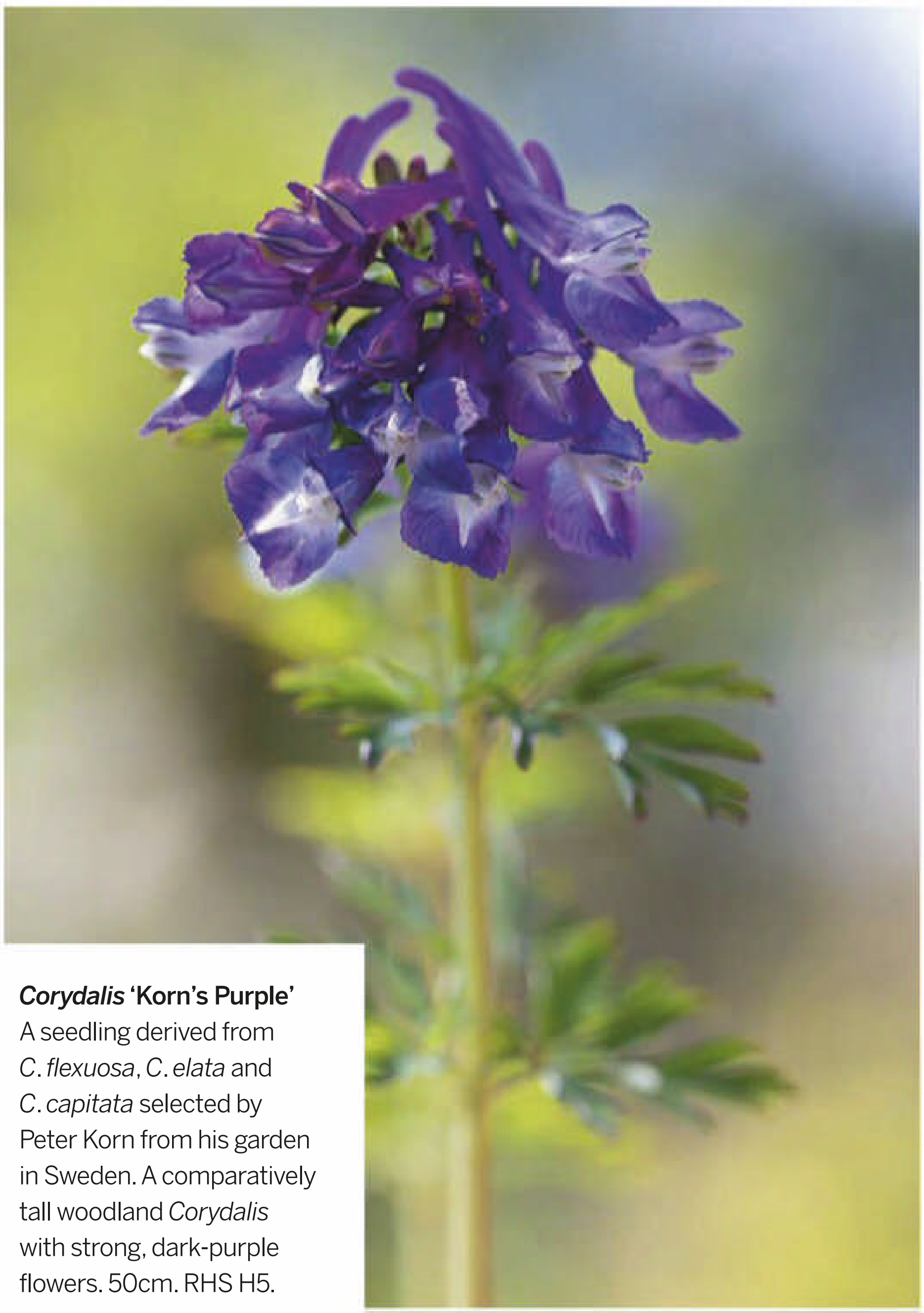




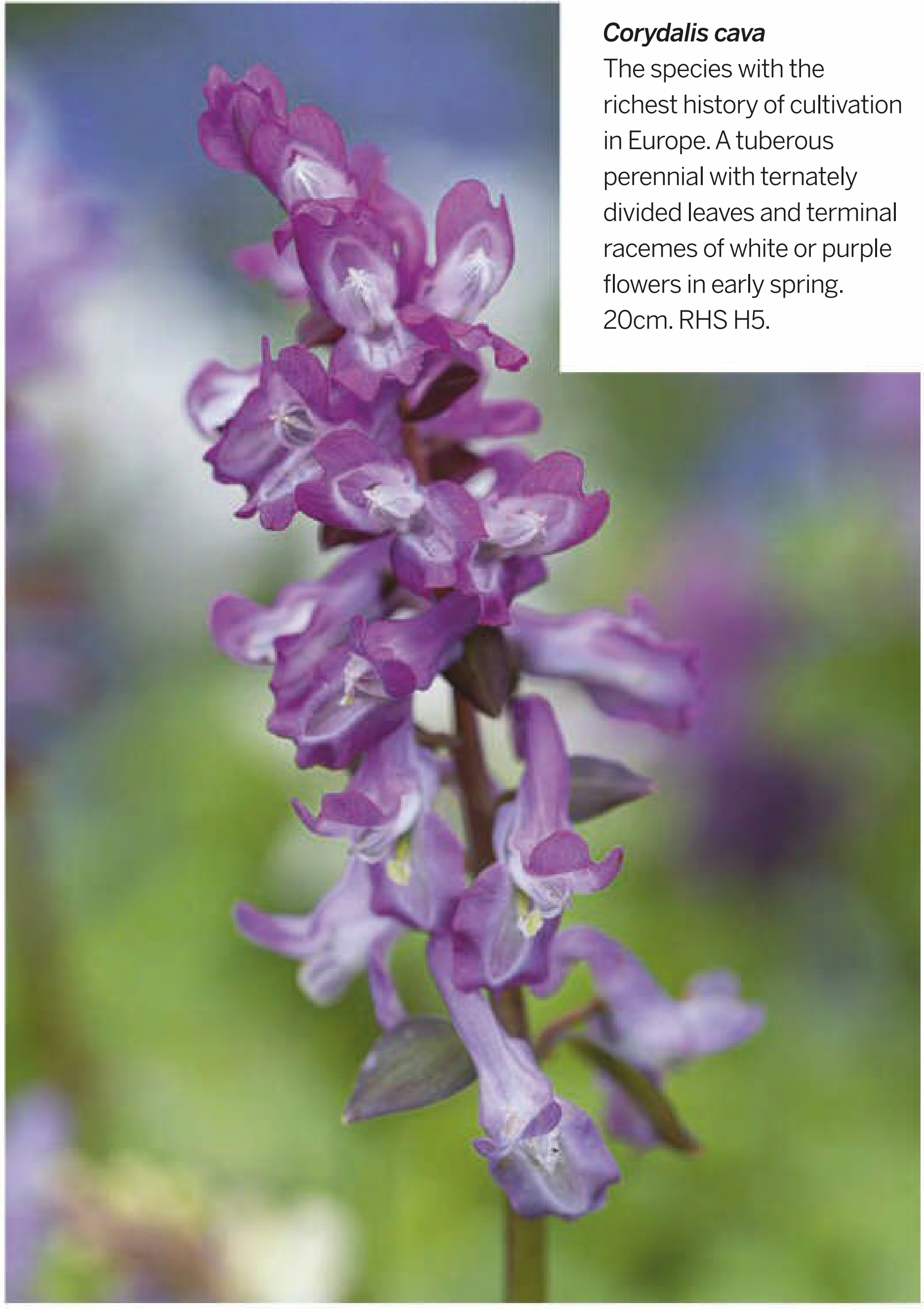
C. CHEILANTHIFOLIA PREMIUM STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY GMBH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; *C. ELATA* MAAYKE DE RIDDER.



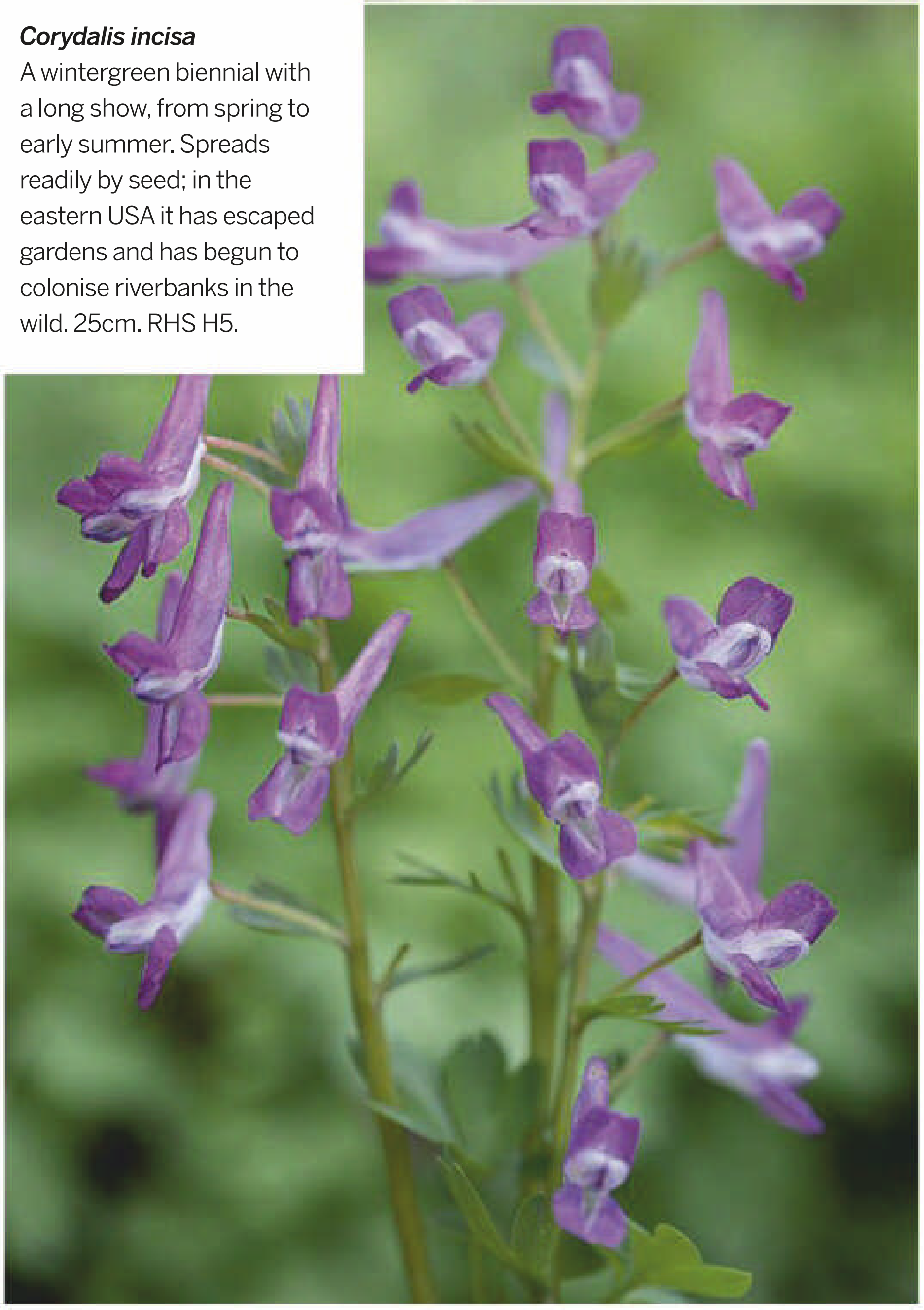
Corydalis malkensis
A reliable species with delicate looks that belie its robust nature. Will happily colonise in deciduous shade by seed and has even been known to make a home in meadow grass. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.



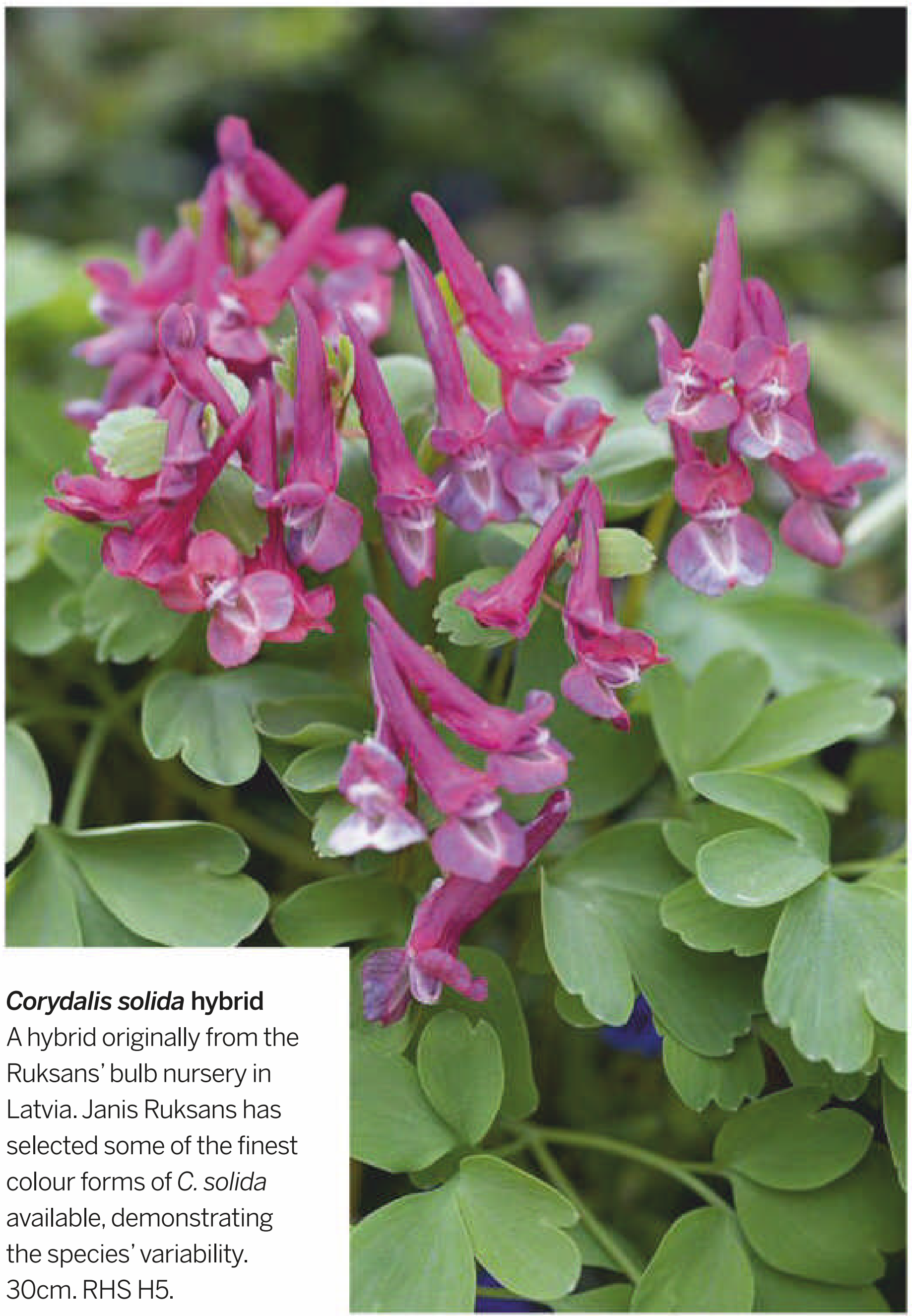
***Corydalis* 'Korn's Purple'**
A seedling derived from *C. flexuosa*, *C. elata* and *C. capitata* selected by Peter Korn from his garden in Sweden. A comparatively tall woodland *Corydalis* with strong, dark-purple flowers. 50cm. RHS H5.



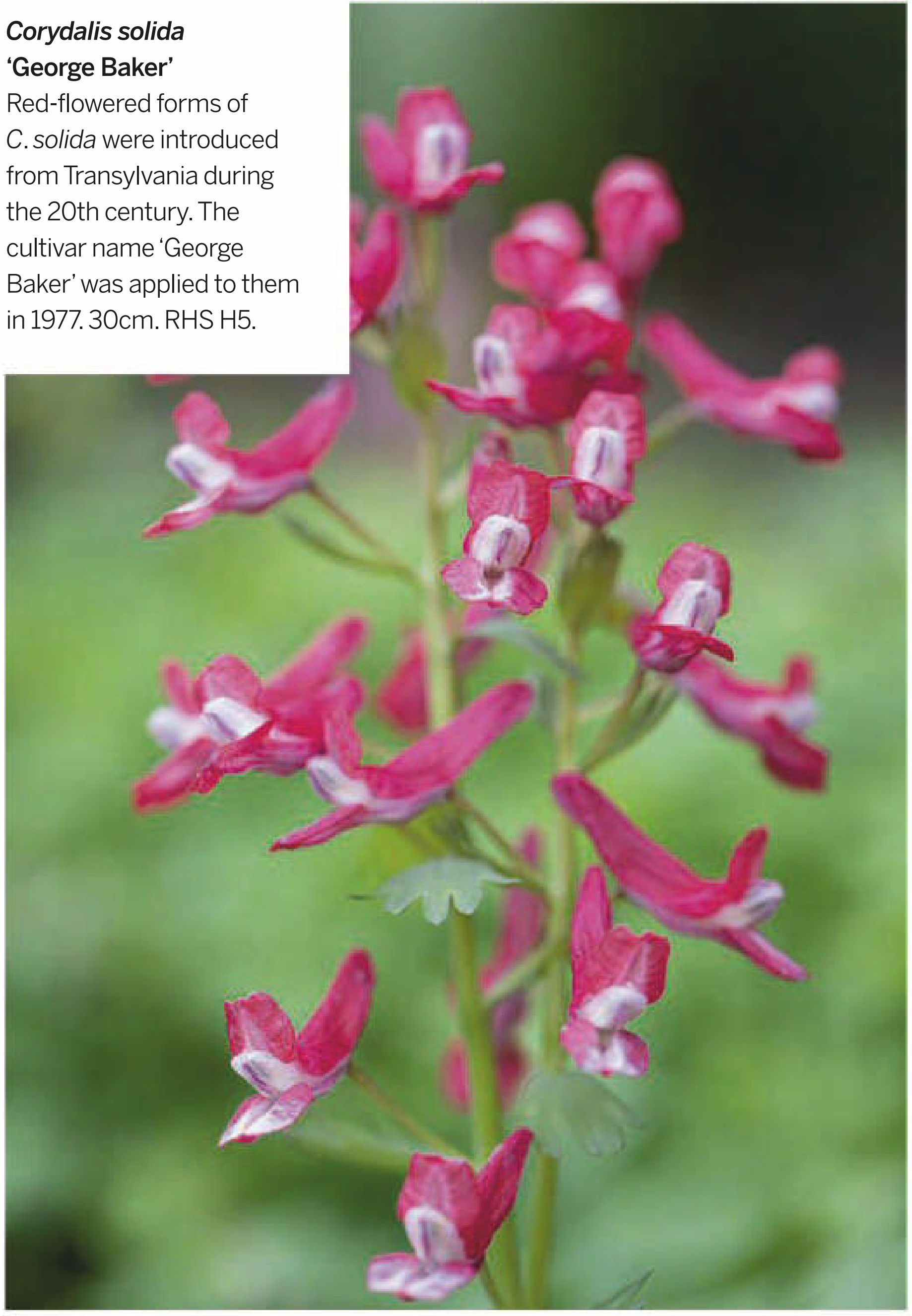
Corydalis cava
The species with the richest history of cultivation in Europe. A tuberous perennial with ternately divided leaves and terminal racemes of white or purple flowers in early spring. 20cm. RHS H5.



Corydalis incisa
A wintergreen biennial with a long show, from spring to early summer. Spreads readily by seed; in the eastern USA it has escaped gardens and has begun to colonise riverbanks in the wild. 25cm. RHS H5.



Corydalis solida hybrid
A hybrid originally from the Ruksans' bulb nursery in Latvia. Janis Ruksans has selected some of the finest colour forms of *C. solida* available, demonstrating the species' variability. 30cm. RHS H5.



***Corydalis solida* 'George Baker'**
Red-flowered forms of *C. solida* were introduced from Transylvania during the 20th century. The cultivar name 'George Baker' was applied to them in 1977. 30cm. RHS H5.

Cultivation

The vast majority of garden-worthy species and cultivars of *Corydalis* can be divided neatly in terms of cultivation between tuberous and rhizomatous species. Both of these classes are susceptible to poor drainage in winter and therefore must be grown in open soil conditions. On clay soil, an admixture of horticultural grit and leaf mould will help to achieve this and there is also the option of growing in raised beds if your soil is incorrigibly claggy or your garden is low-lying. Tuberous species undergo summer dormancy known as aestivation and will not mind drying out in summer. National Collection holder Brian Wickenden recommends planting tubers sideways, particularly those of the concave *Corydalis cava*, to prevent moisture settling on them and initiating a rot.

Rhizomatous woodland species, such as *Corydalis flexuosa* and its allies, present the added complication of dying quickly when allowed to dry out in the summer. This group would thrive more naturally in western parts of the UK where summers are cooler and wetter, but Brian still manages to maintain his collection in one of the driest and sunniest parts of southeastern England. Dappled deciduous shade is a must, while particular attention must be paid to irrigation during hot, dry spells in the summer.

Although *Corydalis* in general require good drainage, there are a number of species that require the exceedingly sharp drainage associated with alpines. There is even one species, *Corydalis taliensis*, that Brian grows in pure, sharp sand, which he acquires from a builders' merchant. A number of *Corydalis* may benefit from seemingly harsh treatment along these lines, as soil conditions that are too rich and moist will encourage lank vegetative growth, which distorts the natural character of the plant.

Propagation by seed is a reliable method providing it is sown fresh and allowed to experience a period of cold weather. The seeds of most *Corydalis* species lose viability quite quickly, so they should be sown in pots of seed compost as soon as ripe and covered with a thin layer of horticultural grit. These pots can then be left in a cold frame until the following spring when the seeds should begin to germinate. Bear in mind that species and cultivars of *Corydalis* readily cross-pollinate so seed-raised progeny will very likely vary from their parents. Division will allow you to increase your stock vegetatively without variation. You should undertake this in early autumn, never in spring.

Where to buy and see

- **Beth Chatto Nurseries**
  Elmstead Market, Colchester,
  Essex CO7 7DB.
  Tel 01206 822007,
  bethchatto.co.uk
- **Brian Wickenden***
  164 Point Clear Road,
  St Osyth, Clacton-on-Sea,
  Essex CO16 8JB.
  Tel 01255 821744,
  corydalis-collection.org.uk
  Garden open by
  appointment only.
- **Edrom Nurseries**
  Edrom, Coldingham,
  Berwickshire TD14 5TZ.
  Tel 01890 771386,
  edrom-nurseries.co.uk
- **Kevock Garden Plants**
  Kevock Road, Lasswade,
  Midlothian EH18 1HX.
  Tel 0131 454 0660,
  kevockgarden.co.uk
- **Pottertons Nursery**
  Moortown Road,
  Nettleton, Market Rasen,
  Lincolnshire LN7 6HX.
  Tel 01472 851714,
  pottertons.co.uk
- **The Savill Garden**
  Windsor Great Park, Wick
  Lane, Englefield Green,
  Egham, Surrey TW20 0UJ.
  Tel 01753 860222,
  windsorgreatpark.co.uk

*National Collection holder

MANY THANKS TO BRIAN WICKENDEN IN WHOSE GARDEN IN ESSEX MOST OF THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

KEITH WEED

The new president of the RHS on balancing the magic and logic of gardening, using science to address the immediacy of climate change and enthusing the next generation of gardeners

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Ever since Keith Weed, former chief marketing and communications officer at the global brand Unilever, returned from Paris in 1997 to live in Surrey, he has been a regular visitor to RHS Garden at Wisley. Today he lives just seven miles away, in a 16th-century farmhouse on Ranmore Common, and his trips to Wisley have a more pressing purpose than filling the car boot with choice plants or peat-free compost, for Keith is now president of the world's most famous gardening charity.

Keith describes himself as "an enthusiastic, rolled-up-sleeves gardener" with a passion for growing fruit and vegetables. This passion was ignited in childhood in the family garden on the Wirral. His mother, a domestic science teacher, taught him to cook and by the age of ten he was growing the veg for the table. As a student he grew herbs on windowsills and he graduated to veg plots once he acquired his first garden. In the 12-acre garden he now shares with his wife Kate, he's most likely to be found in the walled garden, where he raises an impressive variety of crops, including grapes that usually provide them with 30 bottles of wine a year. They've also established a six-acre wildflower meadow, which has settled into a rewarding mix of selfheal, vetch, ox-eye daisies, yellow rattle and more. It's where his three adult children disappear for a restorative stroll as soon as they return home and it's also where he has sited a massive stone-balancing sculpture by Adrian Gray (see right), which he bought at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in, he admits, "a moment of madness".

> THE RHS CAN BE A THOUGHT LEADER IN HOW TO GARDEN MORE SUSTAINABLY

Keith's business career, one guesses, has had few moments of madness. When he joined Unilever there was, as in most big companies, a separate department that drew up the brand's sustainability policy. He changed all that, integrating sustainability across all parts of the business, which was a huge challenge to some of the departments but led, in time, to the company substantially reducing its environmental footprint and increasing its positive social impact while still achieving economic growth. This innovative and collaborative approach was the subject of Keith's TED Institute's talk in 2014, and is, no doubt, one of the reasons the RHS was delighted when he accepted their invitation to become president.

Was he surprised to be asked? "I must admit I was. Up until now, presidents have all come from within the RHS but I think what the RHS decided is that it was a good opportunity to bring a new perspective, and hopefully I can do that." He is also the first president, it seems, with a Twitter following of more than 32,000.

The appointment has come at a turning point in Keith's career. In 2019, as he was approaching 60, he decided to retire from Unilever. "I wanted to do a portfolio of roles, half of which would be businesses and half charities and not-for-profits. I didn't want to be one of those people who end up on boards talking about the good old days. I wanted to remain relevant."

Through his research work at Unilever he is acutely aware of the immediacy of climate change, loss of biodiversity of flora and fauna, and our misuse of the earth's resources. "The RHS can be a thought leader in how to garden more sustainably. For me that is really understanding the breadth of the impact, positive and negative, that gardening has, and working out ways to address that. I don't for a second imagine we can wave a magic wand and the challenges will be solved tomorrow but what we can do is understand the footprint we have and then make plans, with ambitious targets and working with a cross section of people across the industry, to address that."

Keith sees Wisley's new science building as a vital resource. "I think gardening is both magic and logic. The magic of creativity that produces that sensory explosion from things you see and smell and touch; and the logic around the science of gardening, whether it be soil type or understanding the changing seasons. The science side is going to become more important if we're going to garden for not just this generation but for generations to come. I think we have a huge opportunity to engage a younger generation in gardening. Generations X and Z are much more environmentally aware than the generations before them, and are more motivated to act on it."

And here, it seems, Keith is also speaking from personal experience as his son George, having been furloughed last year from his job in sports events, spent several months gardening in his parents' and friends' gardens. Keith's face lights up as he tells me that George has now decided to change career. "It's been a really exciting journey watching him reinvent himself as a gardener."

USEFUL INFORMATION

The RHS Hilltop, Home of Gardening Science Centre, The Wellbeing Garden, The World Food Garden and The Wildlife Garden are due to open at RHS Garden Wisley in June. rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

1

THE BEST BIENNIALS TO GROW FROM SEED

From foxgloves and teasels to wallflowers and honesty, biennials bring colour and beauty to spring and summer borders – and are easy to grow from seed

WORDS **TROY SCOTT SMITH** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Each year I grow a range of more than 20 biennials, their contribution to the spring and early summer garden is considerable, and I would not want to garden without them. By far the best way to grow them is from seed. There is something very satisfying about raising your own plants, the effect is not immediate, but the rewards are immensely satisfying.

Whereas annuals complete their life cycle in a single season, biennials require a period of cold, called vernalisation, to initiate their flowering. From a summer sowing, biennials will produce a basal rosette of leaves, with the plant flowering, setting seed and dying in the following year.

The principles of sowing are exactly the same as for annual seed, but the after-care and timing is different. Whereas most annuals are sown from January through to April, biennials are sown in early summer, planted into nursery rows by late summer before been placed into their flowering positions in autumn.

The first you should sow are sweet Williams followed by foxgloves, verbascum, wallflowers and pansies last of all (with the range of other biennials somewhere in-between). The size of the seed determines the depth of sowing, a good rule of thumb is that the sowing depth should be roughly the same as the size of the seed itself. Apart from foxgloves and verbascums, which need light to germinate, all of our biennials are placed in our cool pot store in the dark, with germination taking place usually within two weeks. When they're large enough to handle, I prick out the seedlings into plug trays before lining them out in the biennial bed for summer. By the time I'm ready to transplant them to their flowering positions, usually around late October or early November, the majority have made good strong plants.

Not only do biennials provide colour in the spring garden, late-flowering biennials, such as sweet William or sweet rocket also bridge that tricky gap between spring bulbs and early emerging perennials and the summer-flowering herbaceous.

1 *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost'
A short-lived perennial best grown as a biennial. A member of the Apiaceae family thriving in hot, dry sites. Its silvery-blue flowers associate brilliantly with the acid yellows of *Euphorbia* or grow it in tandem with grey foliage plants of contrasting soft texture, such as *Artemisia* and *Stachys*. 90cm x 60cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b†.

2 *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora*
This white form of our native foxglove retains all the elegance and charm, with flowers held on one-sided spikes that turn downward slightly at the tips. Plant generously or allow it to self-seed freely to run through the entire bed piercing more rotund or flat shapes. 1.5m x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

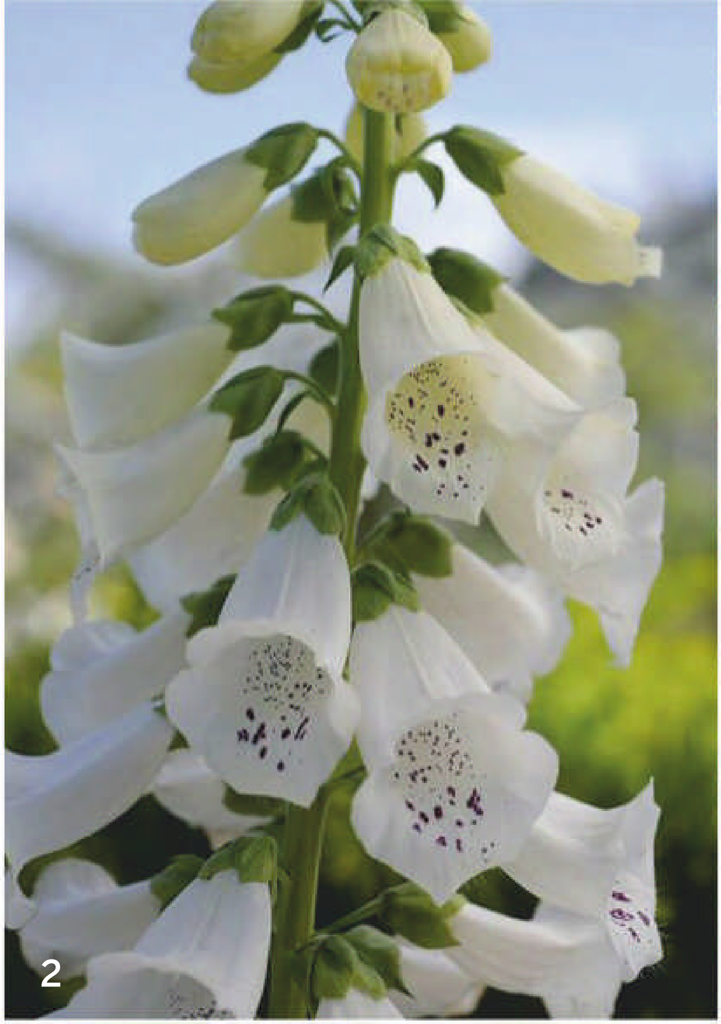
3 *Lunaria annua* 'Chedglow'
The deep-lilac flowers of this relatively new honesty contrast wonderfully with the ripe-plum colour of the foliage, stems and seedpods. Try combining with tulips of a similar colour palette, such as *T.* 'Havran', *T.* 'Ronaldo' and *T.* 'Negrita'. 80cm x 50cm.

4 *Salvia sclarea* var. *turkestaniana* 'Vatican Pink' A biennial whose coarse-textured, grey leaves are not pleasant smelling, but are an attractive feature through winter and spring. But the main event is reserved for June and July when tall stiff spikes emerge and thrust upwards with white flowers and pink persistent bracts. Needs a sunny site, but can grow happily on poor soil. 1.2m x 1m.

5 *Daucus carota* 'Dara'
The wild form of the cultivated carrot is a late-flowering biennial. It has a relaxed quality, perfect for threading through borders to soften those plants with a more formal character. A rich nectar and pollen source, attracting bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects and also birds, which search out the high-energy seeds, later in the season. 75cm x 50cm. RHS H6.

6 *Verbascum blattaria* f. *albiflorum*
A plant often overlooked, but one I love for its easy-going nature and ability to grow almost anywhere, putting itself into places with great artistry. Its five-petalled flowers are white with prominent purple stamens that appear almost to float on the wiry stems. Quick to flower, sometimes in the first year. 70cm x 30cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

7 *Myosotis sylvatica*
The humble forget-me-not blooms non-stop through spring and early summer. It energetically colonises beds and borders adding a low level welcome froth. Happy in sun or shade, but can be prone to powdery mildew if the conditions are too dry. 45cm x 60cm. ▷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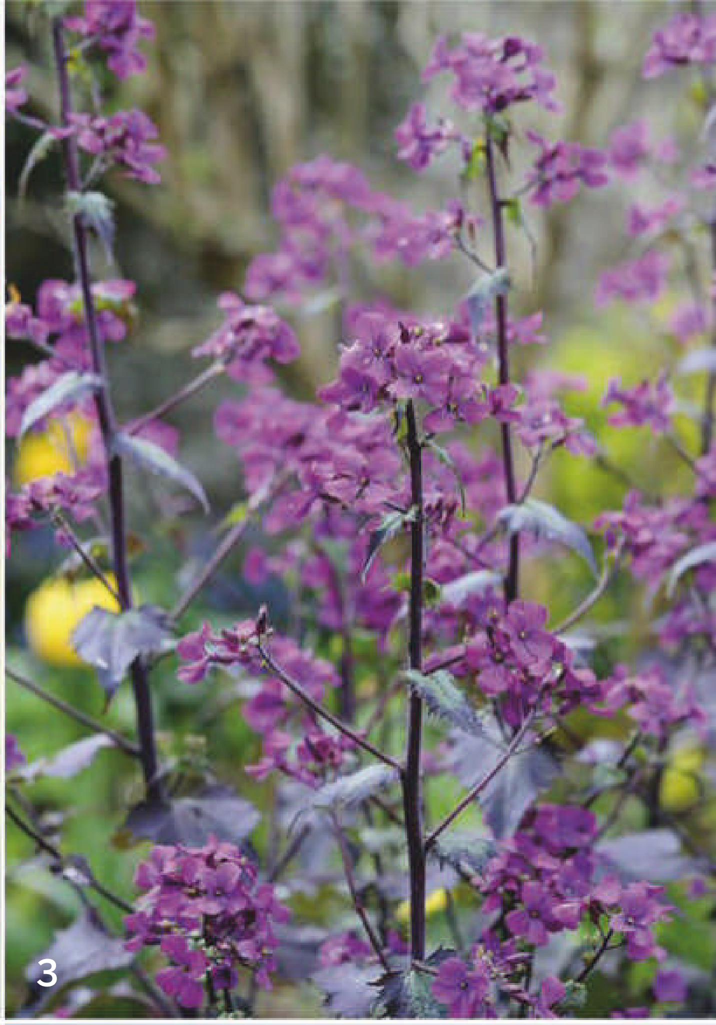
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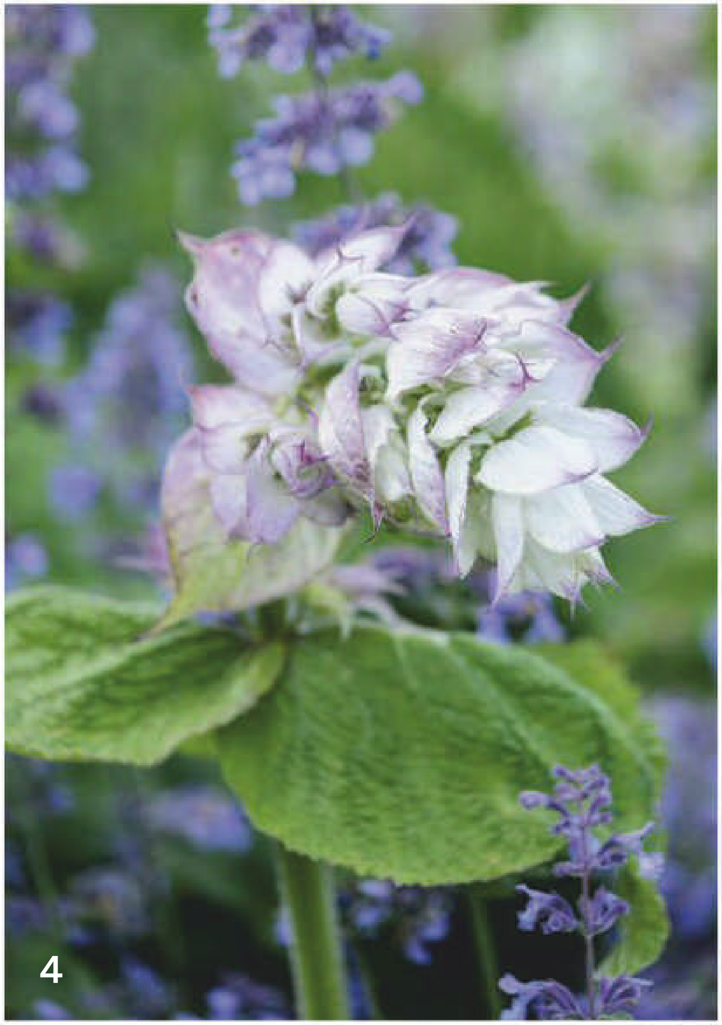
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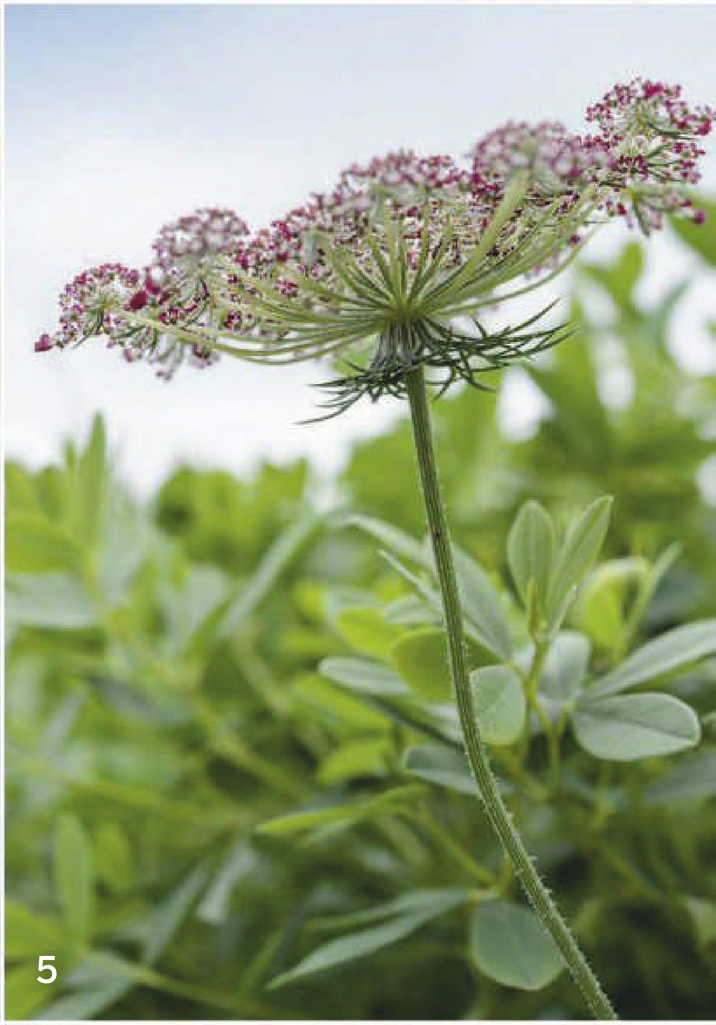
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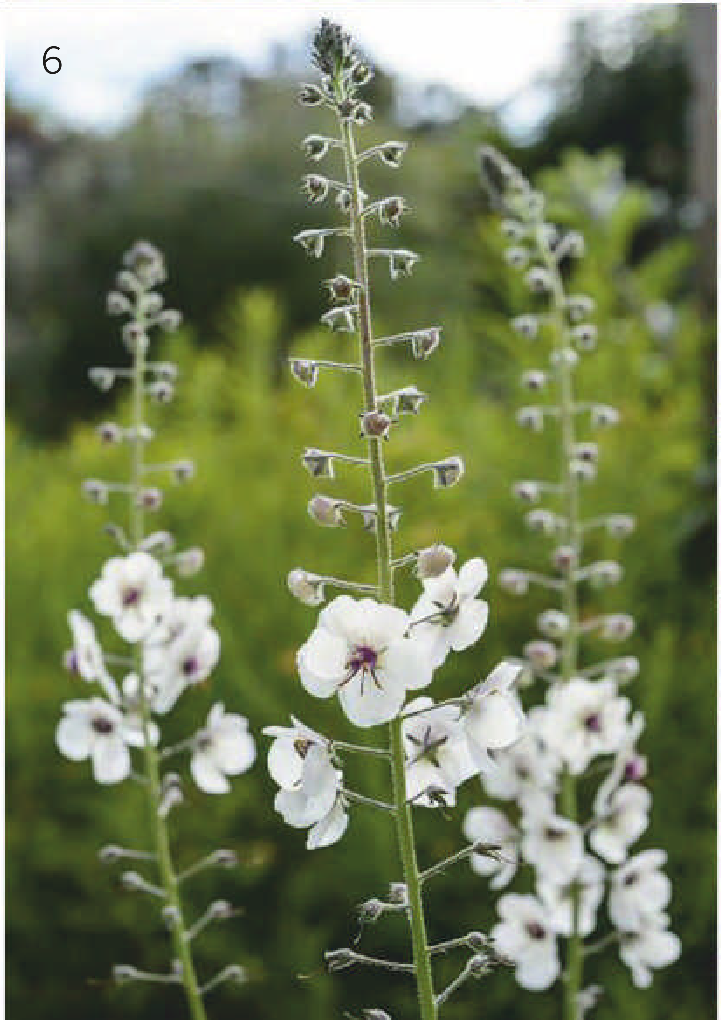
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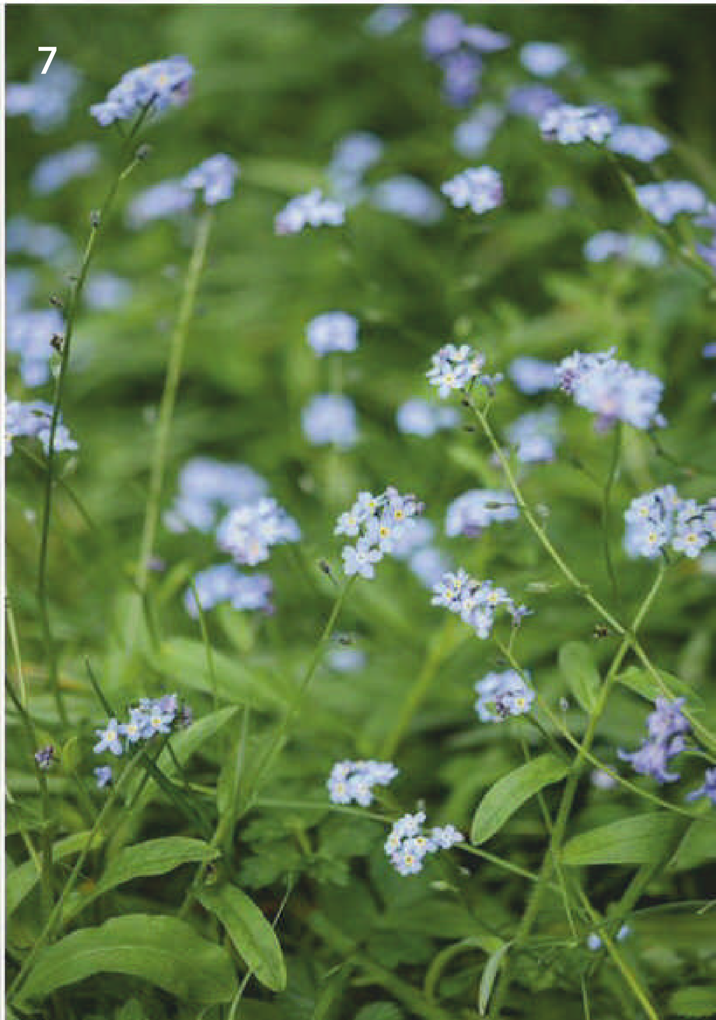
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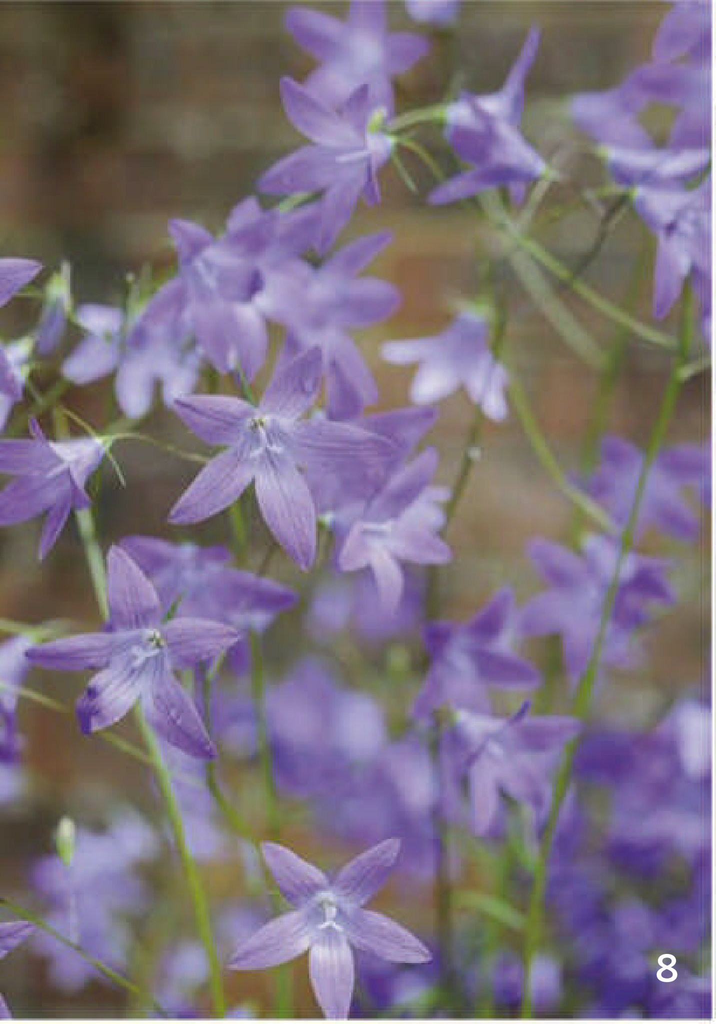
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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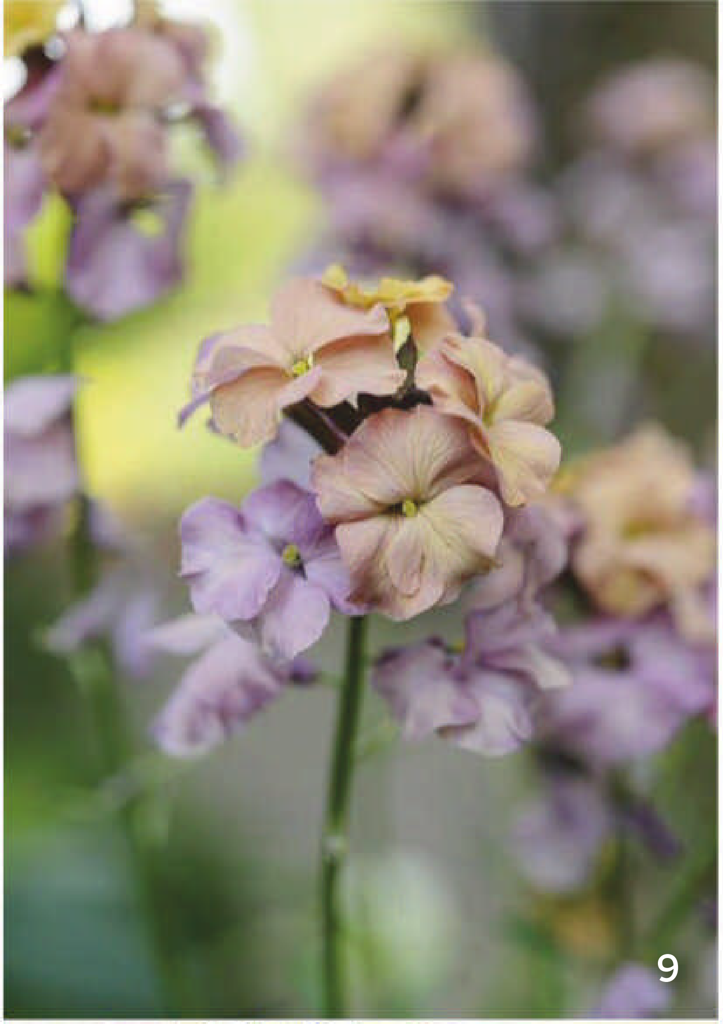
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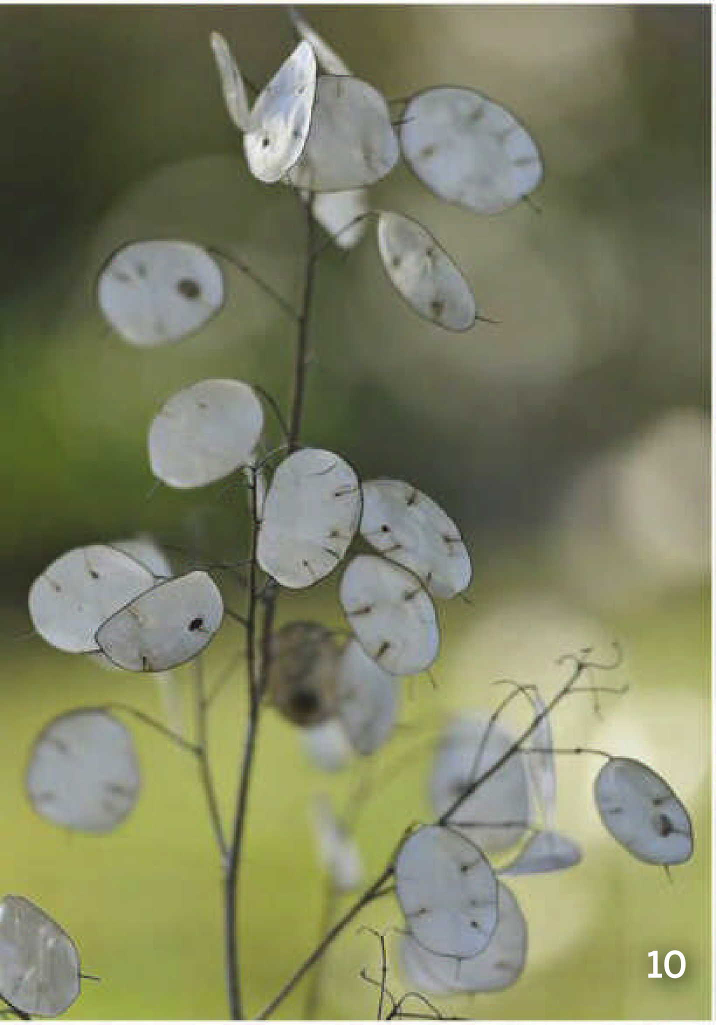
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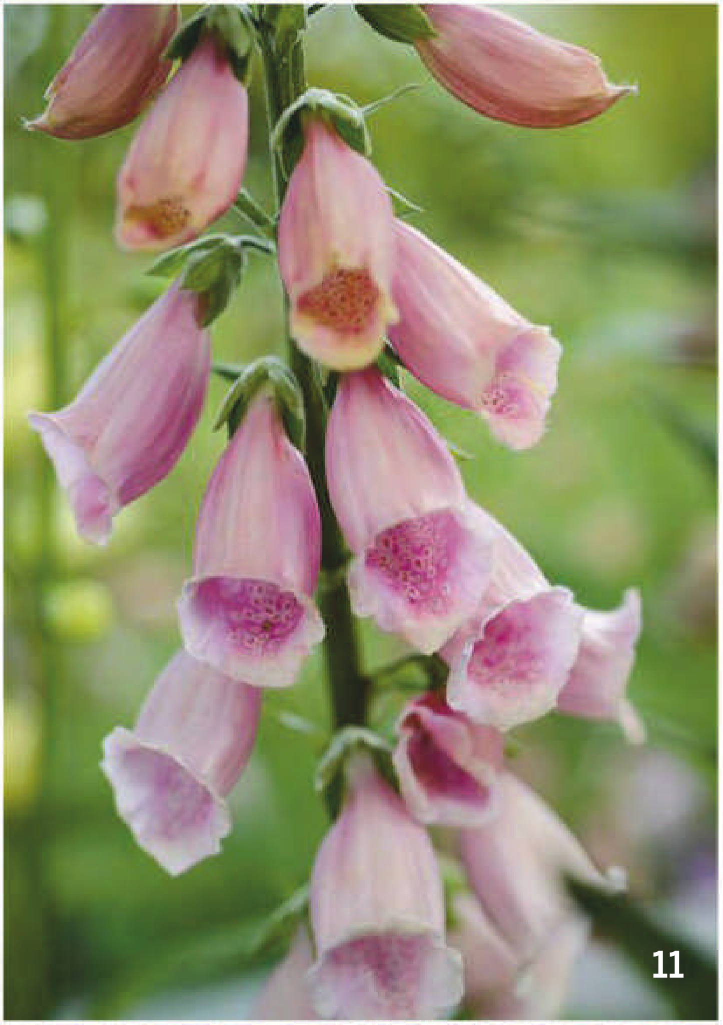
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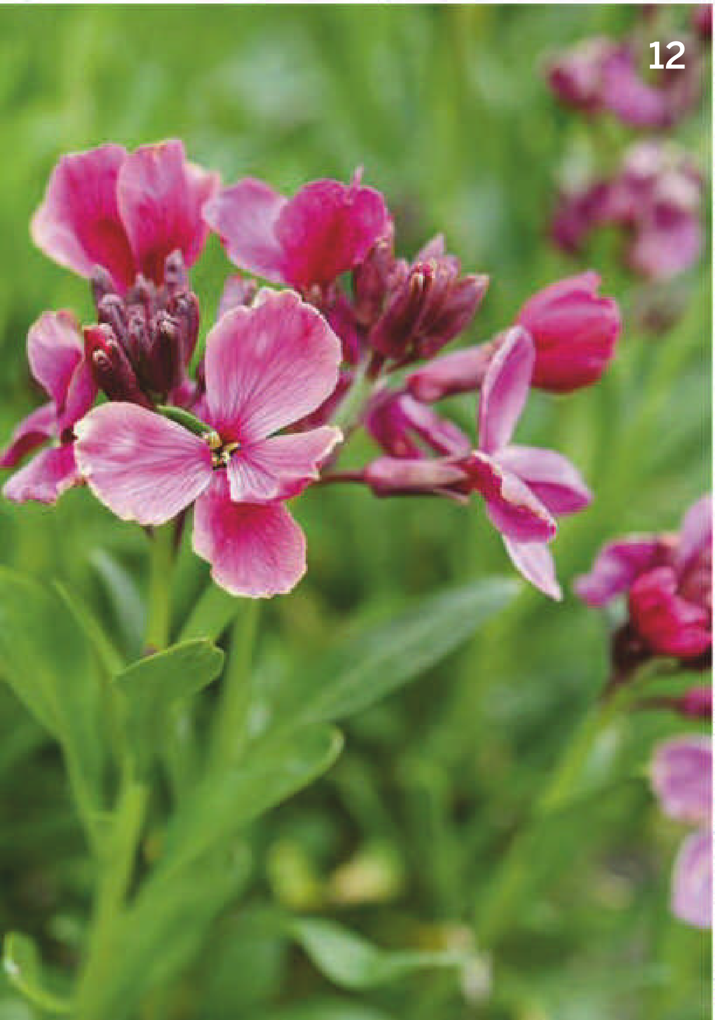
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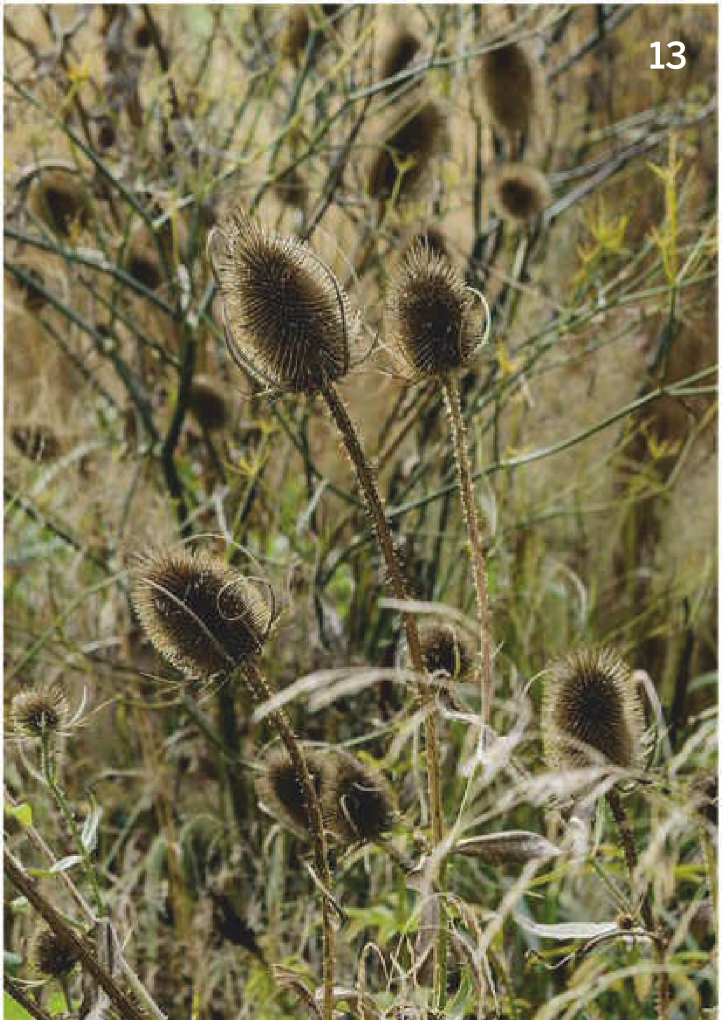
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▷ **8 *Campanula patula***
A beautiful British native wildflower of hedge banks, with slender wiry stems upon which widely spaced bell-shaped flowers of violet-blue are produced. I sometimes grow it around the feet of bearded irises, which it follows in flower. 40cm x 40cm. RHS H5.

9 *Erysimum* 'Pastel Patchwork'
I adore wallflowers and have grown a few every year for nearly 30 years. This new cultivar derived from *Erysimum cheiri* is not only drought tolerant but will also grow quite happily in poor soil. As members of the Brassicaceae family, erysimums are subject to clubroot, flea beetle and attack by cabbage white butterfly, so take preventative action. 70cm x 50cm.

10 *Lunaria annua*
Honesty is one of the first spring biennials to appear blooming in late April or early May, followed by wonderful seedpods in autumn. Grow under the skirts of deciduous shrubs with early spring bulbs. After flowering most stems can be pulled away, but leave a few to develop the seedpods. 60cm x 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Digitalis purpurea* 'Sutton's Apricot'
An old cultivar and one I liked to grow en masse in the Rose Garden at Sissinghurst. Identical in all respects, except colour, from the native purple or white foxglove. Soft-pink flowers, lightly spotted in the throat associate well with early roses and peonies. 1.2m x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Erysimum cheiri* 'Giant Pink'
For this, as with other wallflowers, good flowering is achieved through careful transplanting. Choose a non-frosty, non-windy day to lift plants from nursery beds with a fork, leaving as many roots as possible. If the soil is dry, water it first to minimise the possibility of soil loss and root damage. After lifting, put plants in their permanent positions as soon as possible and water if necessary. 60cm x 40cm.

13 *Dipsacus fullonum*
A robust, tall biennial that can become a menace if it is allowed to self-seed. Nevertheless, a plant of great architectural presence in the garden. Mauve-coloured flowers give way to spiny seedheads, which persist all winter if you dare leave them. 1.8m x 70cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

14 *Delphinium requienii*
A plant I first grew for the Purple Border at Sissinghurst. Tall spikes rise from a basal rosette of glossy, deep-green, slug-resistant leaves. The many flowers, the colour of a wood pigeon's breast, provide an unusual and arresting sight in the border. 2m x 60cm. ▷

WHERE TO BUY

Recommended biennial seed suppliers

- **Chiltern Seeds**
  Tel 01491 824675, chilternseeds.co.uk
- **Higgledy Garden**
  higgledygarden.com
- **Sarah Raven**
  Tel 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com
- **Seedaholic**
  seedaholic.com
- **Special Plants**
  Tel 01225 891686, specialplants.net

▷ **15 *Verbascum* 'Spica'**
From June through to August this tall mullien with large, ruffled, white flowers that have the faintest hint of primrose yellow light up the garden. Leaves are grey and ovate and the stem white-felted. Flowers best in full sun on well-drained soil. 1.3m x 80cm.

16 *Hesperis matronalis* var. *albiflora*
Sweet rocket arrives around the same time as foxgloves and can be grown in tandem to good effect. Its clusters of deliciously spice-scented flowers in white or mauve last for many weeks, even longer in semi-shade. The plant will need staking as it grows – hazel pea-sticks work well for this – and some protection early in the year from pigeons, which will eat the foliage. 1.2m x 80cm.

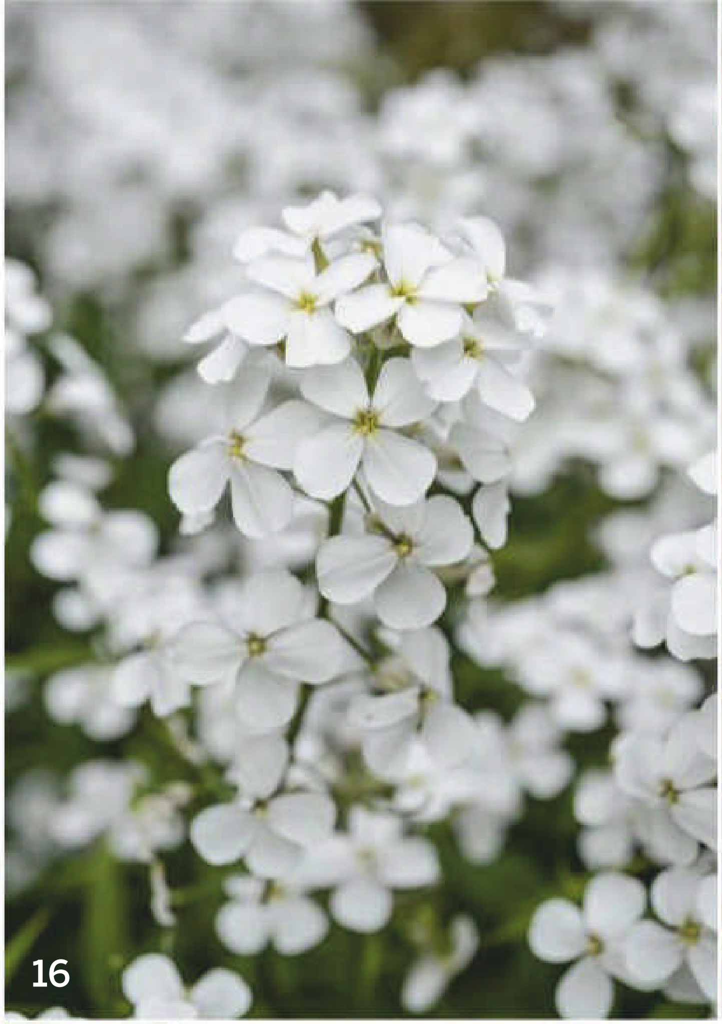
17 *Matthiola incana* 'Lucinda Red'
Attractive grey foliage and almost unbeatable for the punch its flowers pack in the scent league tables. They are a bit muddled in appearance and not the most attractive, but this is not why you grow it. Group in pots and place near a door, to catch a whiff of their perfume. 50cm x 50cm.

18 *Erysimum cheiri* 'Blood Red'
I always prefer the single-colour, highly scented wallflower cultivars, such as this, along with *E. cheiri* 'Fire King', *E. cheiri* 'Cloth of Gold' and *E. cheiri* 'Giant Pink'. Most have a delicious honeyed fragrance, which is intensified by planting in a sunny situation. 40cm x 40cm. USDA 7a-9b.

19 *Onopordum acanthium*
A statuesque plant, not for the faint-hearted. Grey, heavily felted and viciously spiny basal leaves are attractive in year one. Early in year two a single woolly winged, white stem arises and branches at half-way into a candelabra of mauve thistle flowers. A plant I grew to good effect in the White Garden at Sissinghurst. 2.5m x 1m. RHS H5.

20 *Angelica gigas*
From large green leaves, with plum-coloured stems and inflated sheaths, this biennial's refined, domed flowers of deep-maroon emerge in summer through to autumn. Looks good with sanguisorbas or, as here, with white *Ammi majus*. Prefers moist soil with sufficient leg-room to grow. 2m x 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

21 *Smyrnium perfoliatum*
Another favourite of mine for feathering the woodland edge or for naturalising in borders to produce a wild-style aesthetic. I used it to great effect in the nuttery at Sissinghurst where the acid yellow harmonised perfectly with white bluebells, *Trillium chloropetalum* and *Matteuccia struthiopteris*. 60cm x 40cm. RHS H5.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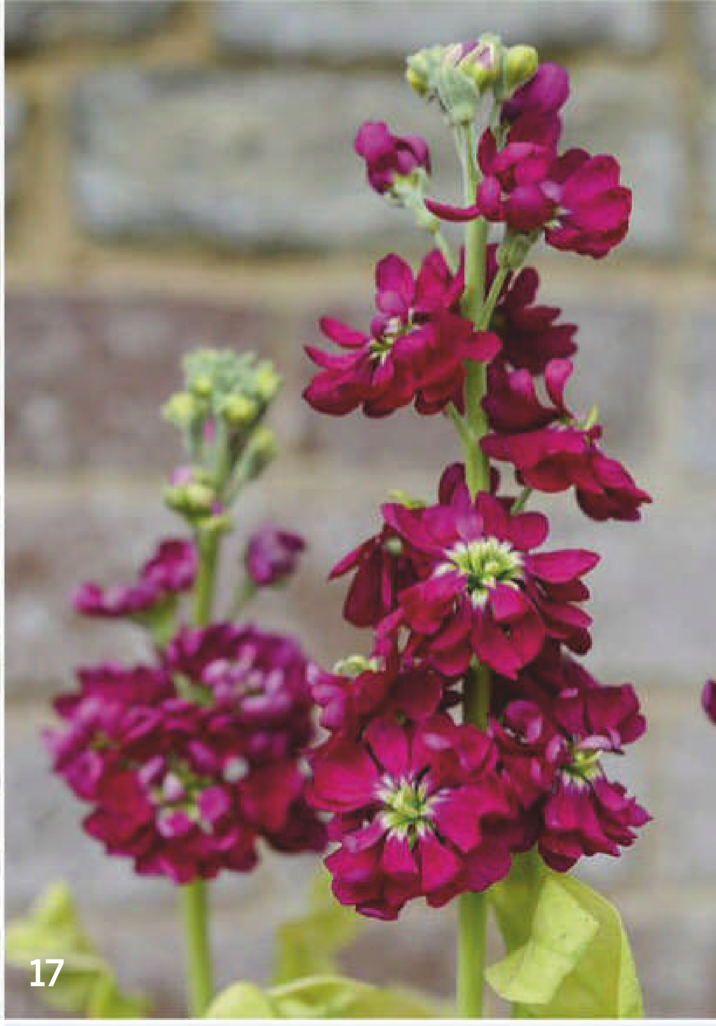
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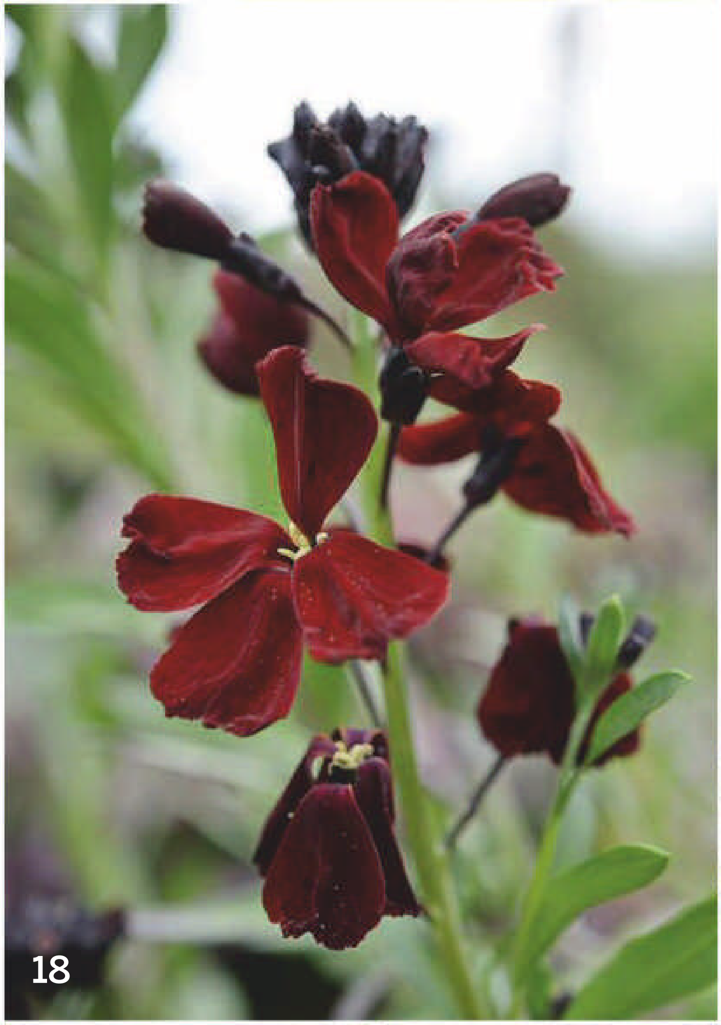
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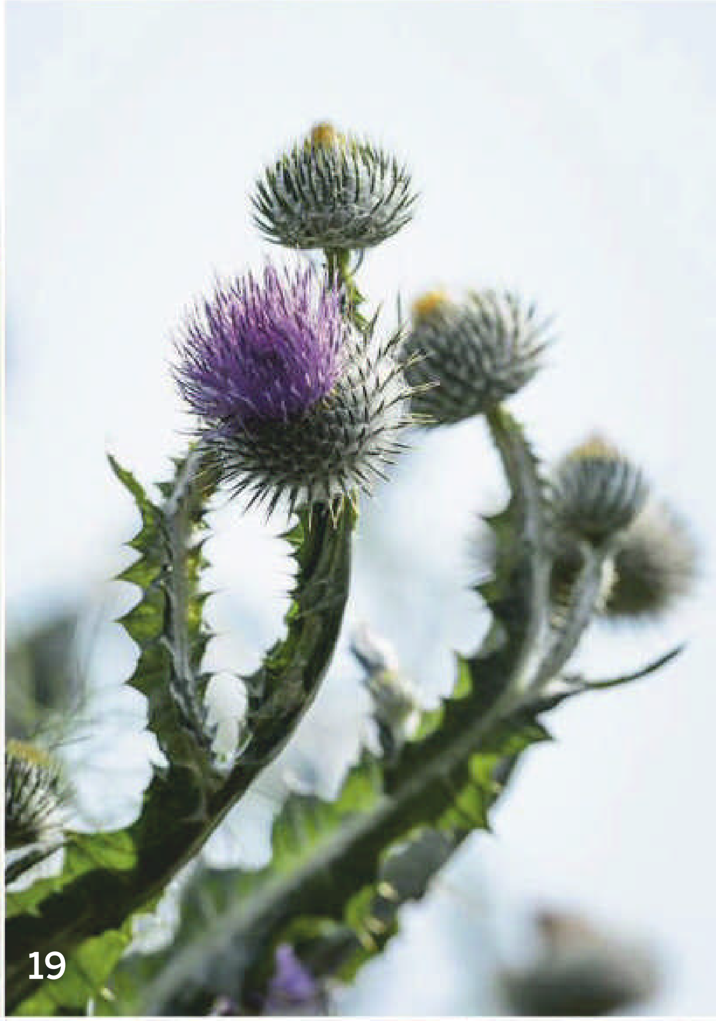
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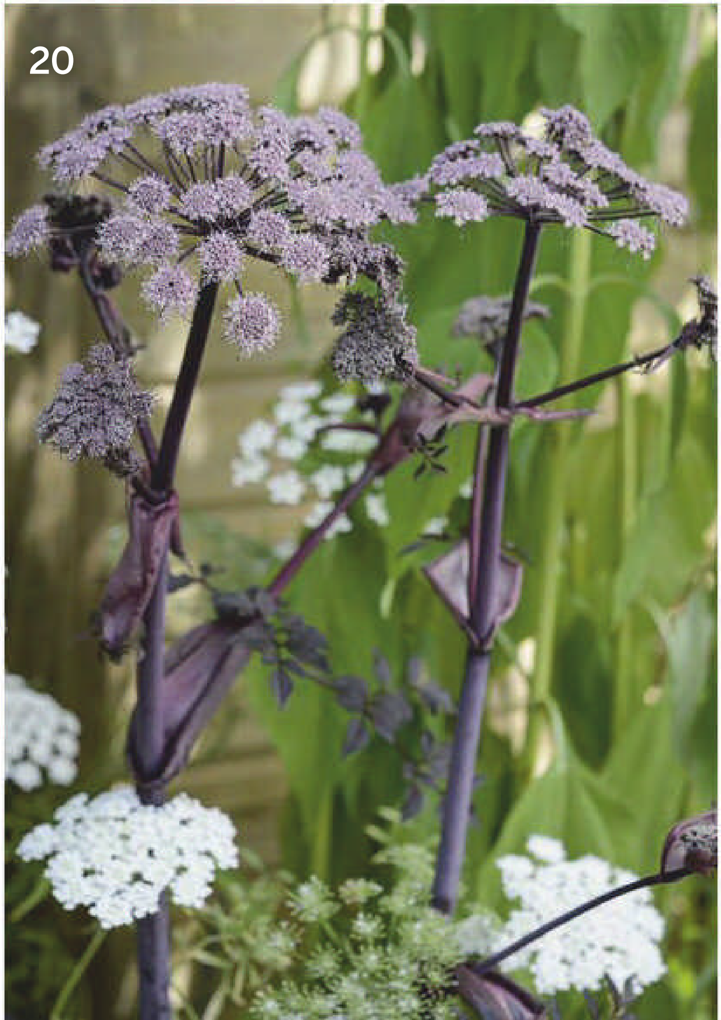
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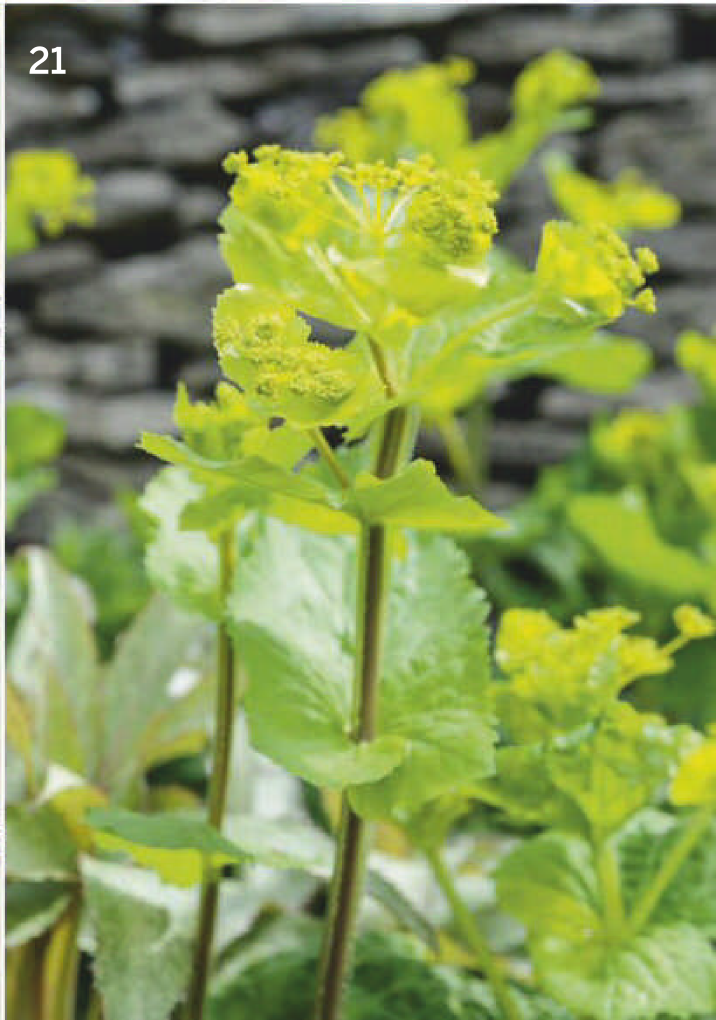
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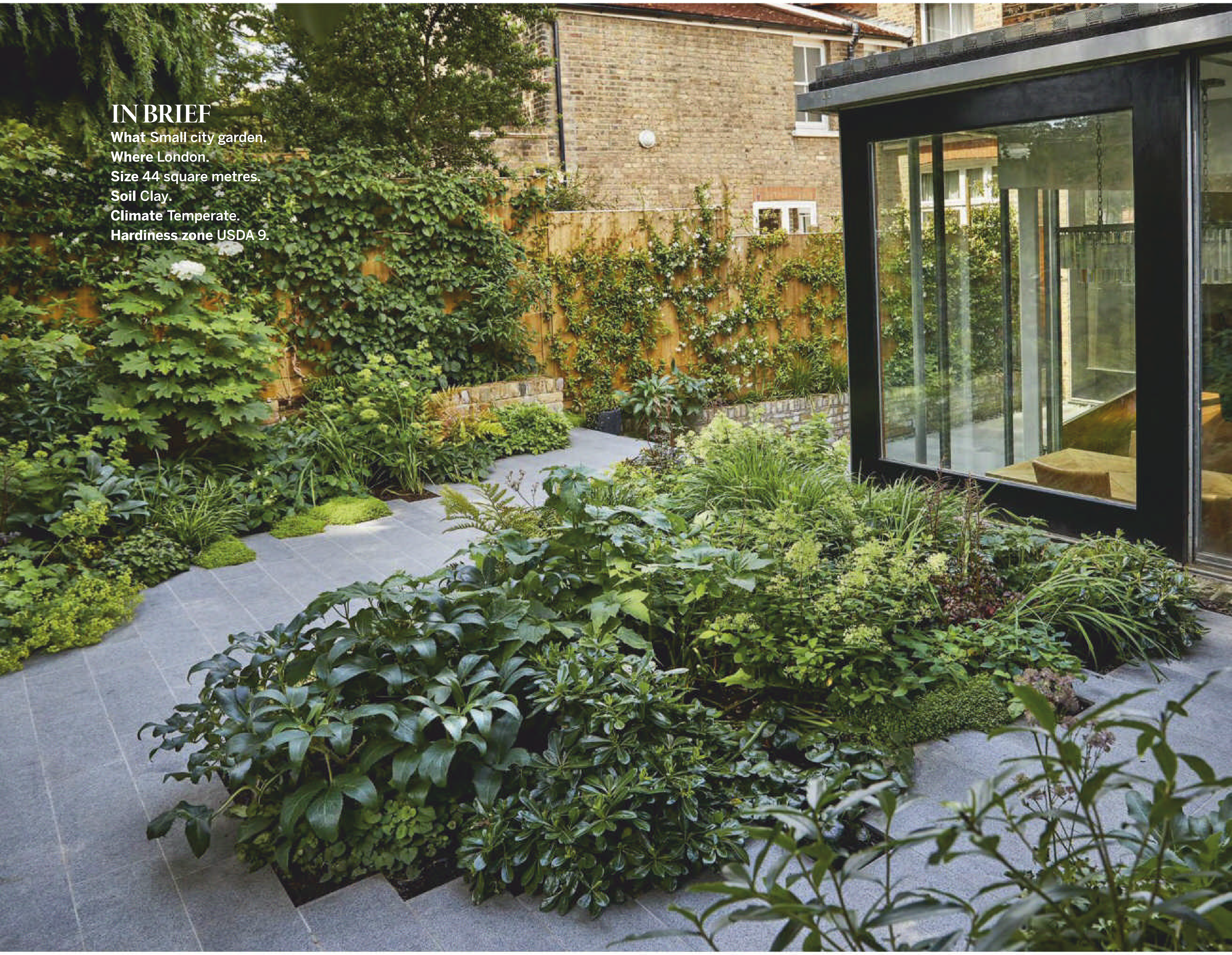
An unusually shaped plot was the inspiration for this striking, lushly planted garden by designer Stefano Marinaz

A new perspective

WORDS NATASHA GOODFELLOW PHOTOGRAPHS ALISTER THORPE



IN BRIEF

What Small city garden.
Where London.
Size 44 square metres.
Soil Clay.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Most London gardens tend to be similar when it comes to shape. There might be a few square or freeform plots, but the vast majority are rectangles, so it is a pleasant surprise to be presented with a space that breaks the mould. This was the experience of garden designer Stefano Marinaz when he first set eyes on this north London, split-level plot, which comes to a very definite triangular point in one rear corner.

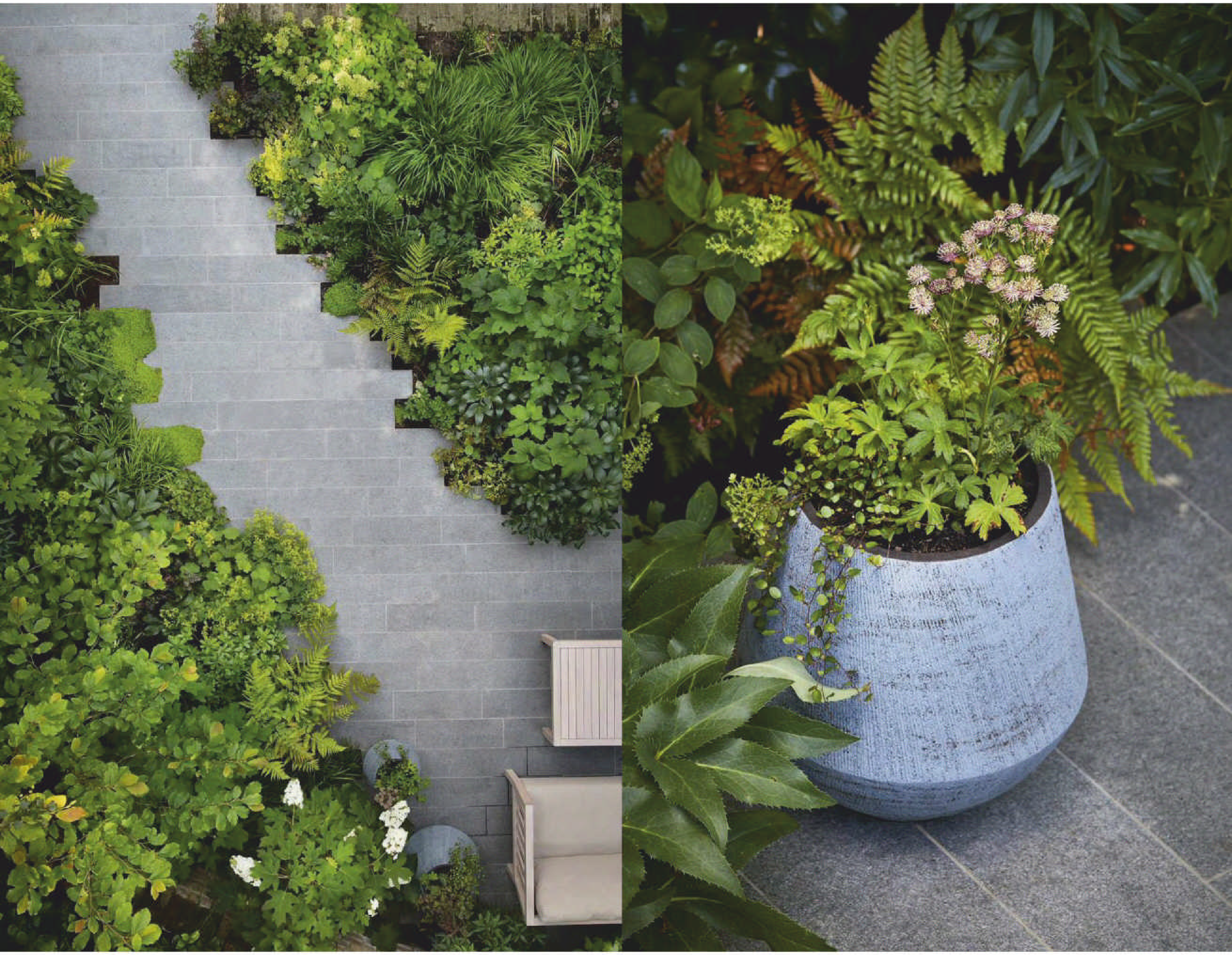
Starting with a very shady and therefore muddy and rarely used lawn, Stefano was keen to create a contemporary, informal and much more usable space. He suggested a seating area at the furthest point, giving the clients a reason to venture out. "I knew a straight path wouldn't work with the shape of the space," he says, "so I used the paving to echo its form while leaving room for some deep beds, which allow for the layering of plants and textures."

The most prominent of these is the large border by the kitchen window which, because of the level change, means that when seen through the open window from inside, the planting is almost at waist height. The lawn is gone, replaced by a lush, verdant mix of *Helleborus argutifolius*, *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum', *Hakonechloa macra* and *Dryopteris erythrosora*. As elsewhere in the garden, the mix is roughly 60 per cent evergreen, with the shapes and colours of the foliage responsible for much ▷

Below, from left to right
The planting is a tapestry of evergreen and deciduous plants, many of them clump-forming, including *Helleborus argutifolius*, *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum', the dwarf *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bobo' and *Hakonechloa macra*.

The planting, built up in layers, spills over the edges of the paving, softening the effect.

The pots are from Atelier Vierkant and harmonise well with the blue-grey granite slabs (from London Stone).

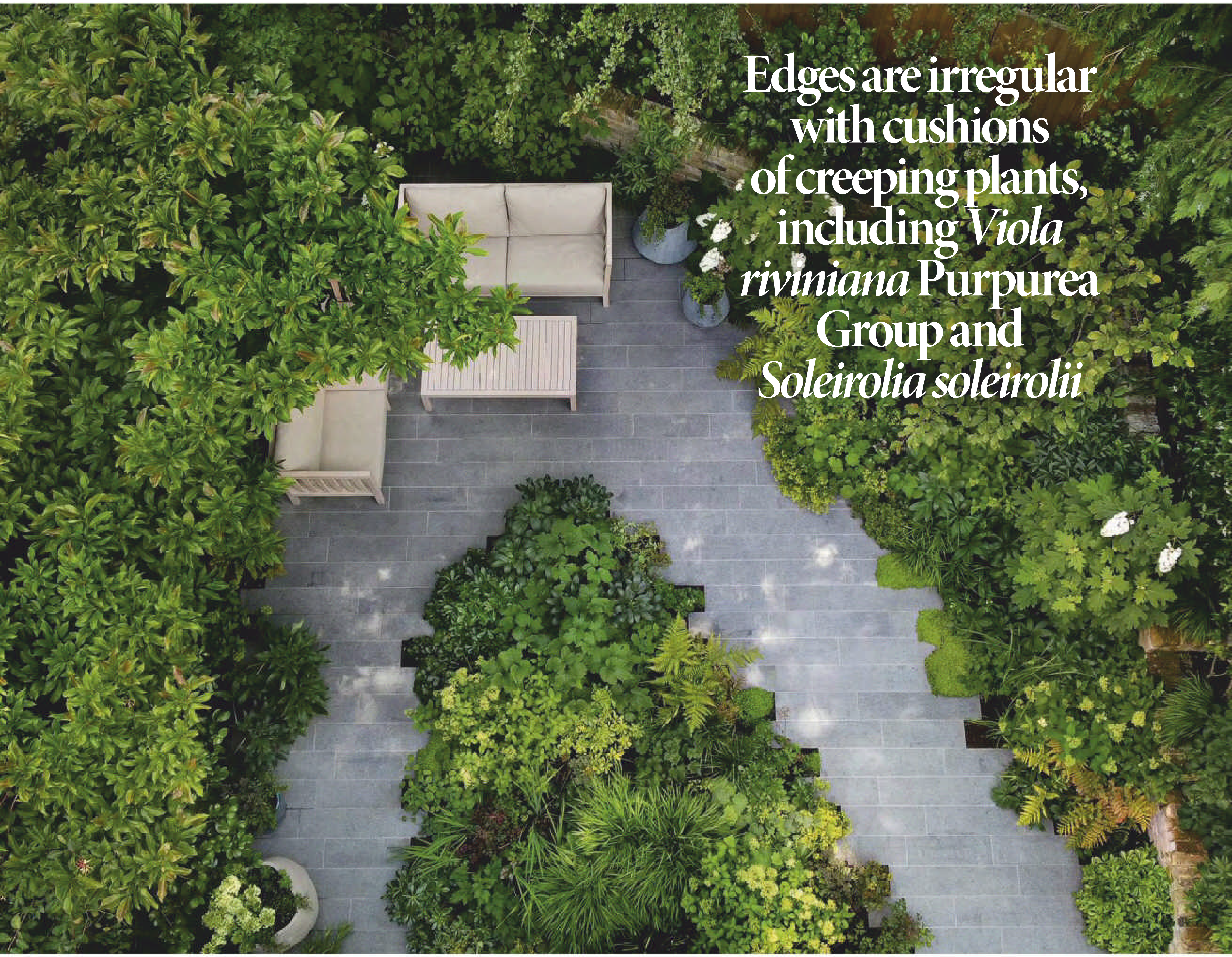


▷ of the interest. Floral highlights come in the form of white narcissi in spring; *Trachelospermum jasminoides* in summer; *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' in autumn; and the wonderfully scented *Daphne bholua* in winter. *Hydrangea* feature prominently too, given their ability to handle shade and clay soils. *H. paniculata* Bobo (= 'Ilvobo') is used in the main bed, *H. quercifolia* Snow Queen (= 'Flemygea') appears in the borders, and *H. anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* clothes a new fence.

Stefano specified the blue-grey terracotta pots from Atelier Vierkant feeling that their modern, minimalist look would work well with the granite paving, itself chosen for its light grey hue and resistance to water and frost. Large areas of paving always risk overwhelming a space and so to prevent this, Stefano has kept the edges irregular, softening them with cushions of creeping plants including *Viola riviniana* Purpurea Group and *Soleirolia soleirolii*, which help to minimise maintenance, a task the owners have now taken over themselves. "This is the first garden they've made," says Stefano. "I think the fact they want to take care of it and that it is a joyful activity for them says something about how they feel about the space." A garden that provides you with a new perspective on life, as well as on your space, has to be one worth celebrating. ⊐

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Stefano's work at **stefanomarinaz.com**

Below
By placing the furniture at the rear of the space, Stefano gave his clients a new perspective on the garden. A large *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* behind the sofa provides privacy and a sense of enclosure, complemented by the branches of an overhanging magnolia.



Edges are irregular with cushions of creeping plants, including *Viola riviniana* Purpurea Group and *Soleirolia soleirolii*

6 key plants

1 *Viola riviniana* Purpurea Group This low-growing perennial is one of Stefano's favourite self-seeders. He loves it as much for its spreading, weed-suppressing habit as its beautifully coloured, heart-shaped leaves. Happy in full shade, in spring it bears small, purple flowers. 10cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b[†].

2 *Astilbe* 'Chocolate Shogun' A striking plant with deep-burgundy leaves and tall stems of dark-pink flowers in high summer. Easy to maintain – just chop it back hard in late autumn or early spring. 60cm. RHS H5.

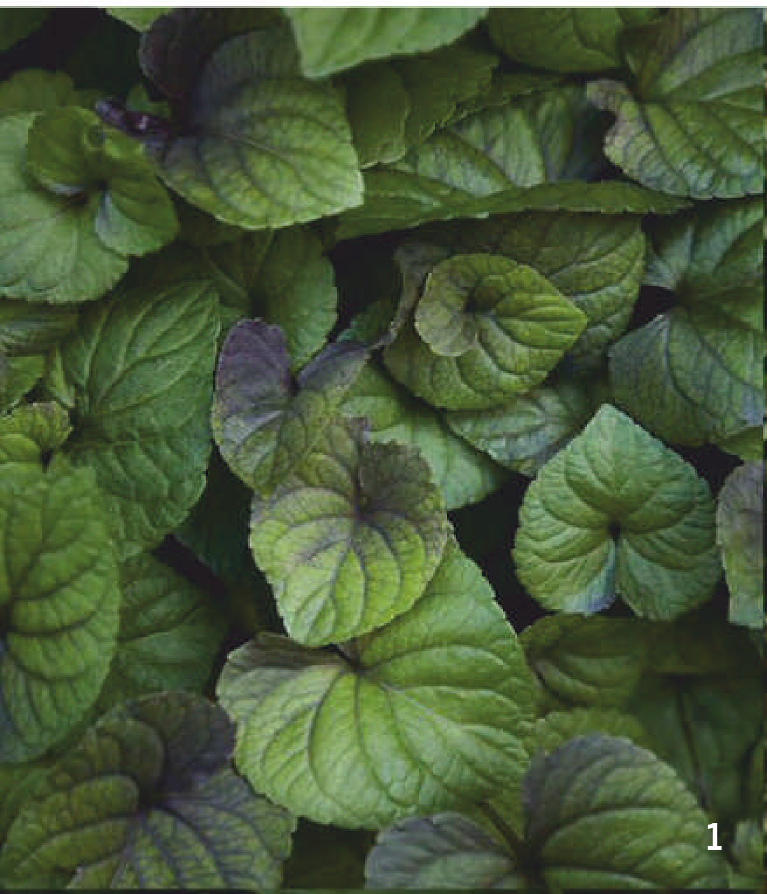
3 *Astrantia* 'Roma' Pincushions of pink flowers borne on wiry stems for months throughout the summer make this clump-forming perennial a great choice for shady or woodland gardens. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Hydrangea quercifolia* Snow Queen (= 'Flemygea') This hydrangea makes a good-sized mound of foliage, with a profuse display of white flowers that turn pink as the season progresses. The deeply cut green leaves take on a beautiful range of colours in autumn. 2m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

5 *Muehlenbeckia complexa* This deciduous climber can reach up to 3m in height, although Stefano likes to use it in pots where its trailing stems can be shown to best advantage. In this garden, its rounded leaves echo the clumps of *Soleirolia soleirolii* planted in the paving. 3m. RHS H3.

6 *Helleborus argutifolius* A different beast to most hellebores, this is larger, more upright and has much more presence in the border. Grown primarily for its handsome serrated foliage, though it also bears pale green, long-lasting flowers in spring. 1m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available..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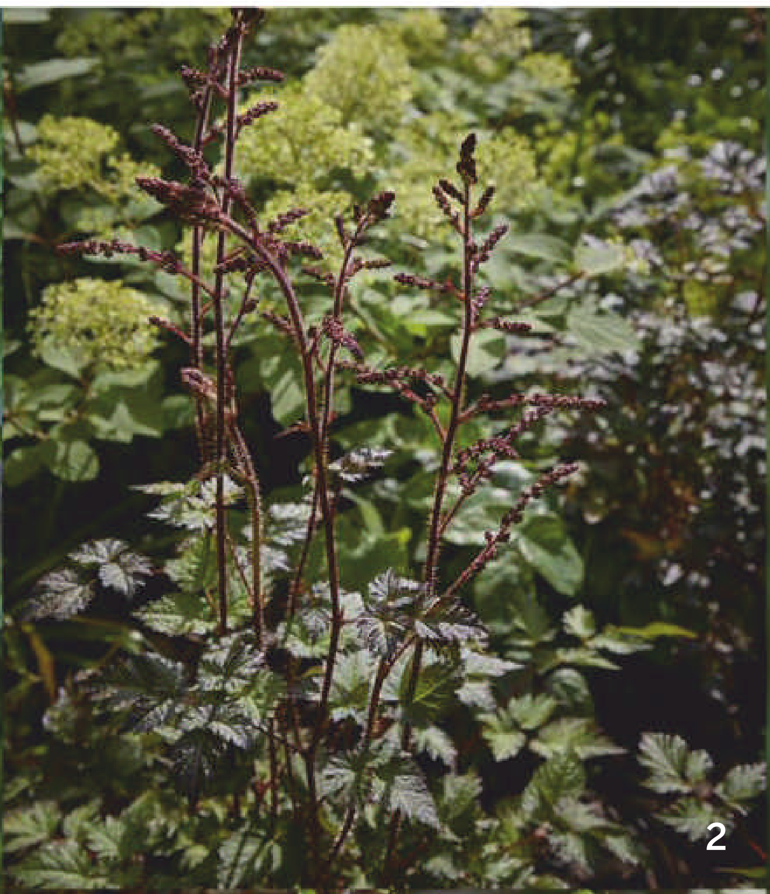
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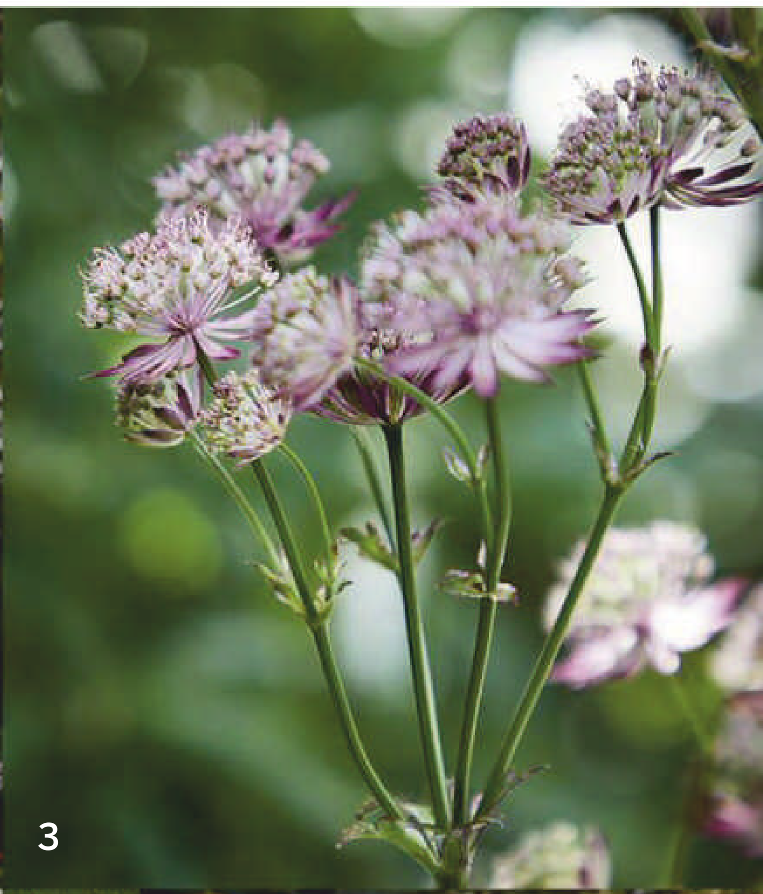
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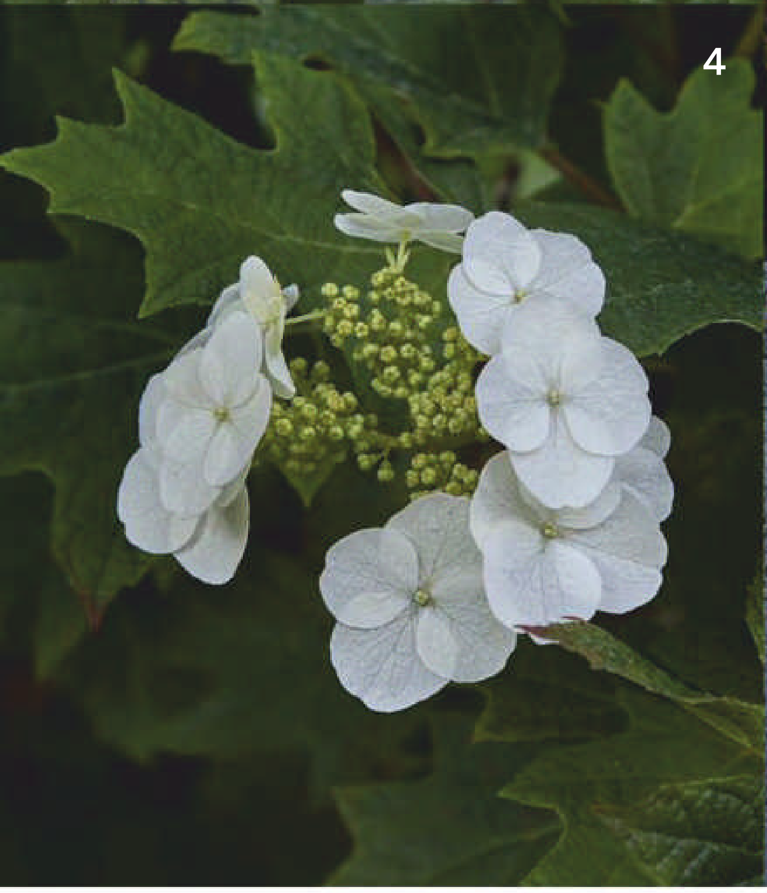
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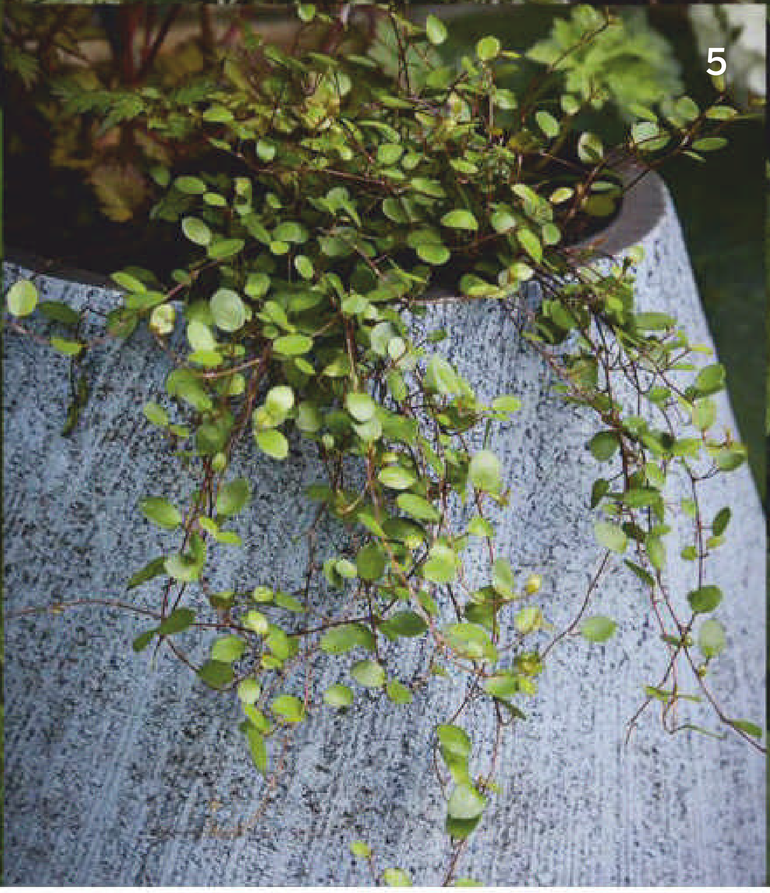
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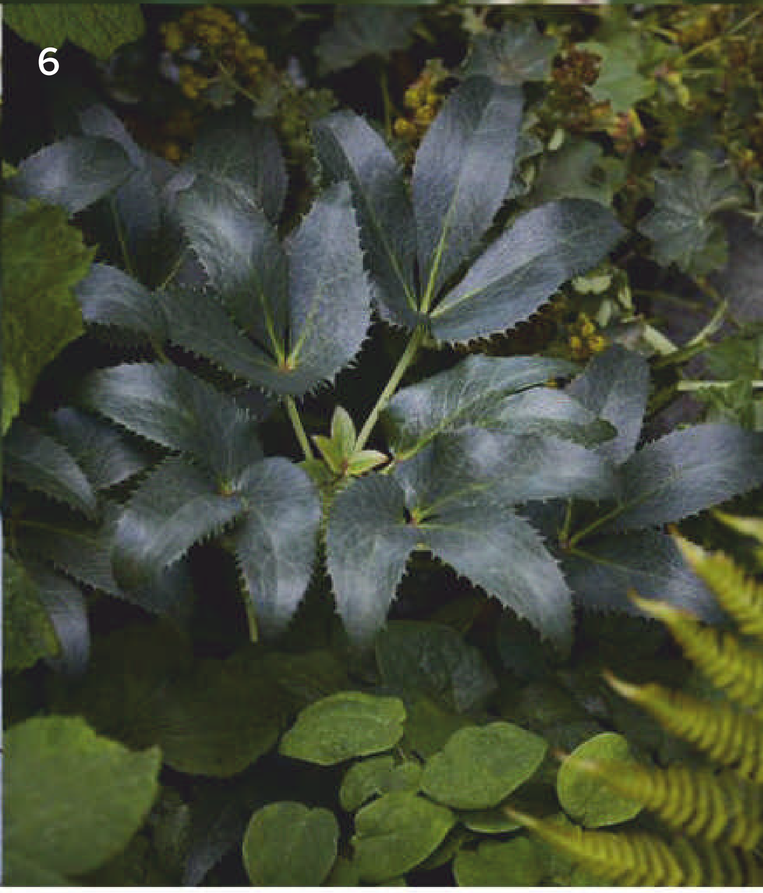
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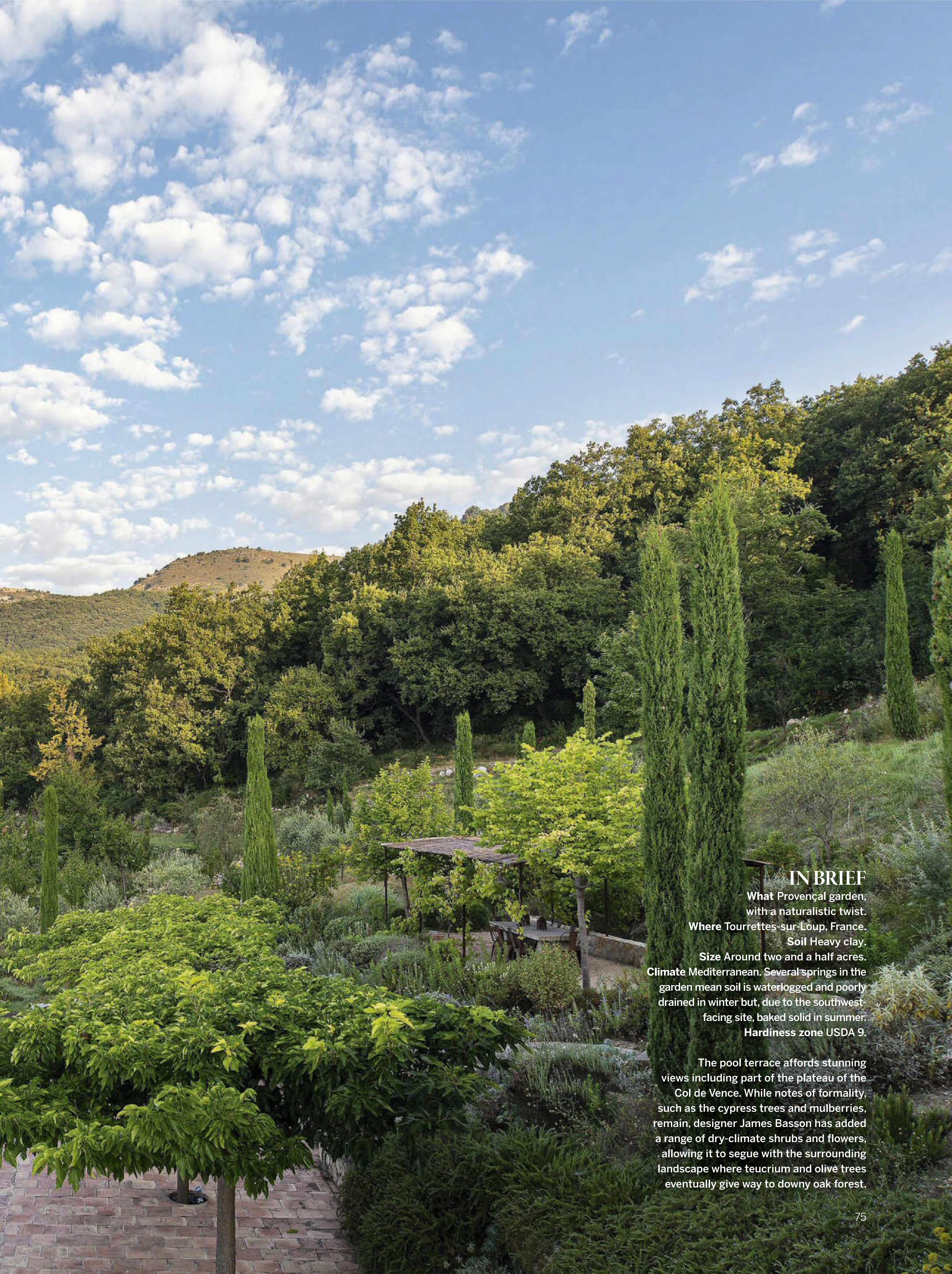
Outward looking

James and Helen Basson have given a classic Provençal garden a naturalistic twist to blend with the stunning surrounding landscape

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS



IN BRIEF

What Provençal garden, with a naturalistic twist.
Where Tourrettes-sur-Loup, France.
Soil Heavy clay.
Size Around two and a half acres.
Climate Mediterranean. Several springs in the garden mean soil is waterlogged and poorly drained in winter but, due to the southwest-facing site, baked solid in summer.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

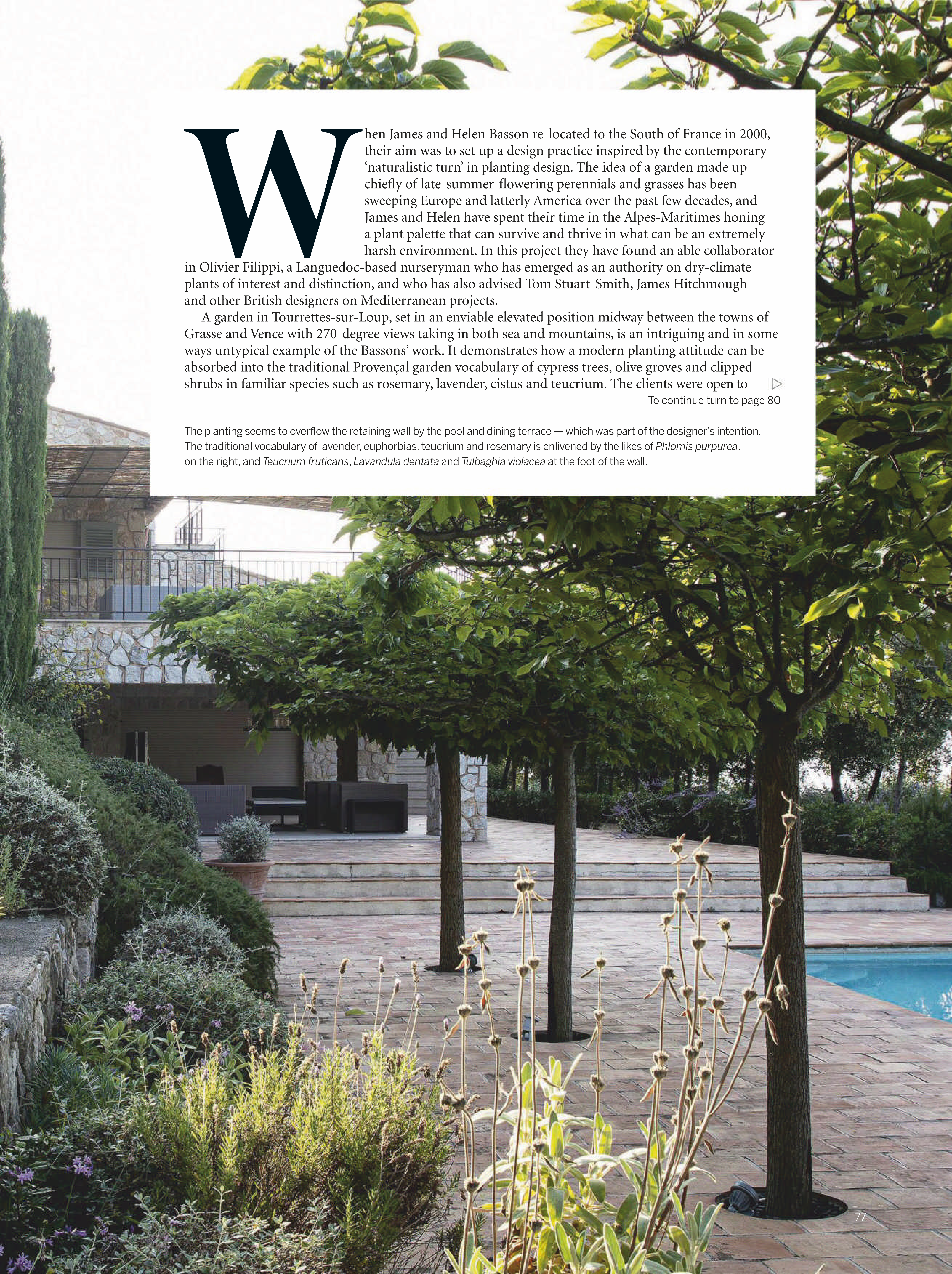
The pool terrace affords stunning views including part of the plateau of the Col de Vence. While notes of formality, such as the cypress trees and mulberries, remain, designer James Basson has added a range of dry-climate shrubs and flowers, allowing it to segue with the surrounding landscape where teucrium and olive trees eventually give way to downy oak forest.

The clients were open to James's missionary zeal for a looser, wilder tone, and over the years it's turned into a real collaboration

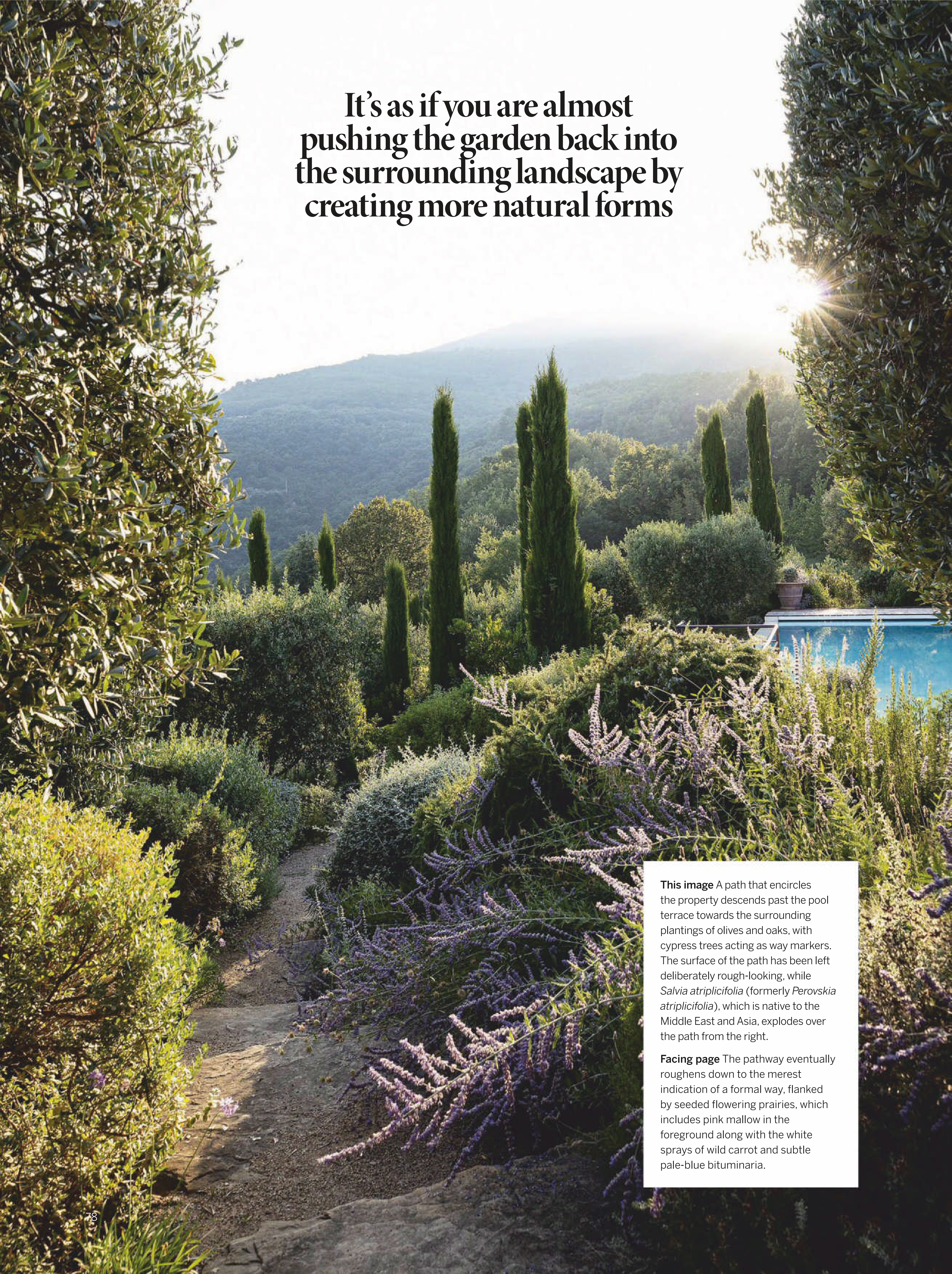
When James and Helen Basson re-located to the South of France in 2000, their aim was to set up a design practice inspired by the contemporary 'naturalistic turn' in planting design. The idea of a garden made up chiefly of late-summer-flowering perennials and grasses has been sweeping Europe and latterly America over the past few decades, and James and Helen have spent their time in the Alpes-Maritimes honing a plant palette that can survive and thrive in what can be an extremely harsh environment. In this project they have found an able collaborator in Olivier Filippi, a Languedoc-based nurseryman who has emerged as an authority on dry-climate plants of interest and distinction, and who has also advised Tom Stuart-Smith, James Hitchmough and other British designers on Mediterranean projects.

A garden in Tourrettes-sur-Loup, set in an enviable elevated position midway between the towns of Grasse and Vence with 270-degree views taking in both sea and mountains, is an intriguing and in some ways untypical example of the Bassons' work. It demonstrates how a modern planting attitude can be absorbed into the traditional Provençal garden vocabulary of cypress trees, olive groves and clipped shrubs in familiar species such as rosemary, lavender, cistus and teucrium. The clients were open to ▷

To continue turn to page 80



The planting seems to overflow the retaining wall by the pool and dining terrace — which was part of the designer's intention. The traditional vocabulary of lavender, euphorbias, teucrium and rosemary is enlivened by the likes of *Phlomis purpurea*, on the right, and *Teucrium fruticans*, *Lavandula dentata* and *Tulbaghia violacea* at the foot of the wall.



> It's as if you are almost pushing the garden back into the surrounding landscape by creating more natural forms

This image A path that encircles the property descends past the pool terrace towards the surrounding plantings of olives and oaks, with cypress trees acting as way markers. The surface of the path has been left deliberately rough-looking, while *Salvia atriplicifolia* (formerly *Perovskia atriplicifolia*), which is native to the Middle East and Asia, explodes over the path from the right.

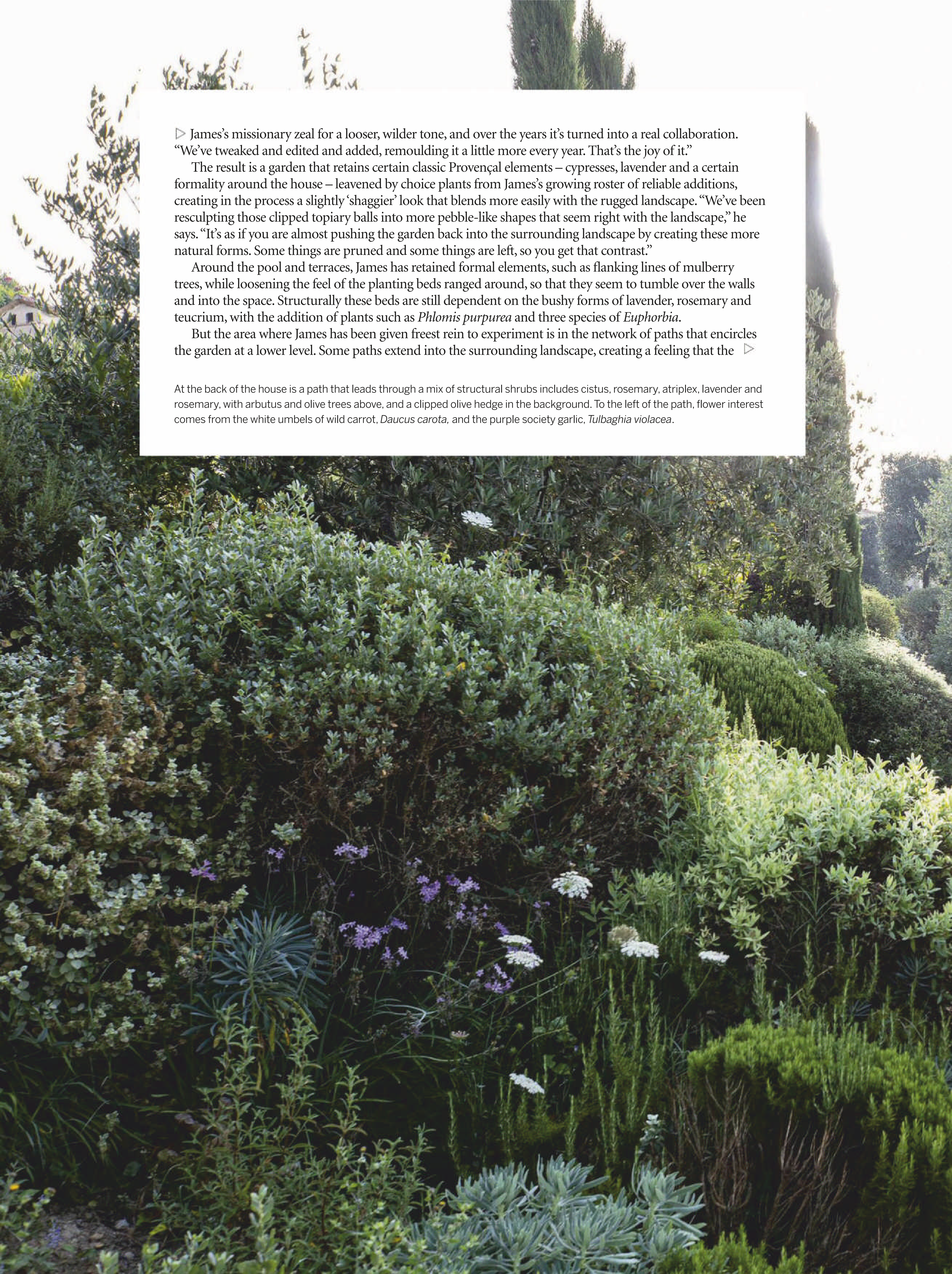
Facing page The pathway eventually roughens down to the merest indication of a formal way, flanked by seeded flowering prairies, which includes pink mallow in the foreground along with the white sprays of wild carrot and subtle pale-blue bituminaria.

▷ James's missionary zeal for a looser, wilder tone, and over the years it's turned into a real collaboration. "We've tweaked and edited and added, remoulding it a little more every year. That's the joy of it."

The result is a garden that retains certain classic Provençal elements – cypresses, lavender and a certain formality around the house – leavened by choice plants from James's growing roster of reliable additions, creating in the process a slightly 'shaggier' look that blends more easily with the rugged landscape. "We've been resculpting those clipped topiary balls into more pebble-like shapes that seem right with the landscape," he says. "It's as if you are almost pushing the garden back into the surrounding landscape by creating these more natural forms. Some things are pruned and some things are left, so you get that contrast."

Around the pool and terraces, James has retained formal elements, such as flanking lines of mulberry trees, while loosening the feel of the planting beds ranged around, so that they seem to tumble over the walls and into the space. Structurally these beds are still dependent on the bushy forms of lavender, rosemary and teucrium, with the addition of plants such as *Phlomis purpurea* and three species of *Euphorbia*.

But the area where James has been given freest rein to experiment is in the network of paths that encircles the garden at a lower level. Some paths extend into the surrounding landscape, creating a feeling that the ▷



At the back of the house is a path that leads through a mix of structural shrubs includes cistus, rosemary, atriplex, lavender and rosemary, with arbutus and olive trees above, and a clipped olive hedge in the background. To the left of the path, flower interest comes from the white umbels of wild carrot, *Daucus carota,* and the purple society garlic, *Tulbaghia violacea*.

We've tweaked and edited and added, remoulding it a little more every year. That's the joy of it

▷ garden is somehow part of the wild. Traditional elements, such as cypress trees, help define the line of the paths, with James's flowering plants added to the mix to create interest and richness.

Among James's favourites are *Bupleurum fruticosum*, a Mediterranean shrub with large, spreading umbels of yellow-green flowers, and *Daucus carota*, which produces more compact umbels of white flowers and acts as a link plant. "It is difficult in some ways as it self-seeds so much and can be messy looking," James says. "But in this garden it creates this floating structure at height – and then just disappears."

The key is maintenance. James and Helen have come to realise that the plants themselves are not enough to create and sustain an intended tone. This is true everywhere, of course, but perhaps even more so in this harsh climate, where the local gardeners are used to working in a particular way. To this end, the Bassons have developed a team of trusted 'artist-gardeners' who work in pairs, dropping in on their gardens to ensure that the garden is not beginning to look too manicured. In the hills of Provence, it transpires, the plants alone are not enough – more than ever, it's the gardening that counts. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about the Bassons' work at **scapedesign.com/en**

This image Close to the entrance to the house, a relaxed seating area beside a water trough is shaded by two white mulberry trees that link the planting to the pool terrace at the rear.

Facing page A straight, stepped path (with *Centranthus ruber* sprouting at lower right) provides access at the front of the house, which faces the sea. However, a tall clipped-olive hedge has been planted to create a hard boundary, obscuring neighbouring houses on the slopes below. It makes for unimpeded vistas in almost every direction and a feeling of glorious solitude.

HOW TO START A

micro nursery

WORDS **KATIE DUTON**

Stemming from a similar business model to micro-bakeries and micro-breweries, micro-nurseries encapsulate a more personal approach to selling and buying. The popularity of shopping from small, independent businesses has grown tremendously over the past few years, so it's no surprise that there's now a greater interest in independently grown plants too. If you have ever wondered about the idea of setting up shop in your garden or selling your plants online, there is no time like now. The joy of the micro-nursery is that it is accessible to anyone who loves plants and the task of tending to them. It's accommodating too. Whether you have only a windowsill-width of growing space or a spacious polytunnel, if there's room to grow, there's room to sell. The work can be done part-time and incorporated into your usual gardening routine. In fact, many of us may have taken the first steps towards starting a micro-nursery without even realising it, sharing and exchanging plants with like-minded people. Passing on seeds or cuttings of favourite plants to neighbours and friends was how many micro-nurseries started. Here three successful micro-nursery owners share their tried-and-tested methods of practice and offer some useful tips to keep in mind before starting out. At the root of all micro-nurseries is, perhaps most vitally, an unwavering fascination and passion for plants. With a practical business brain and steadfast love of the plants you wish to grow and sell, micro-nursery success will be ripe for the picking.

Exotic Earth Plants

Lee Betts discovered a love of subtropical plants after a trip to the Isles of Scilly in 2009, he now grows over 50 of them in his back garden in Devon

'I tested ten to 20 different plant species to see which ones worked best for me'

What does your micro-nursery specialise in? I specialise mainly in subtropical genera, including *Musa*, *Hedychium*, *Colocasia*, *Passiflora*, *Justicia*, *Brugmansia*, *Abutilon*, *Iochroma* and *Echium*.

And why these particular plants? I have been inspired by these plants since a trip to the Isles of Scilly where *Brugmansia sanguinea* grows in some of the island's gardens. This, with a number of other subtropical species, inspired me to set up the business in 2018 after two years trialling plants.

What inspired you to start your nursery? My passion for growing subtropical plants in the UK started 15 years ago as a hobby, it then made sense to me to share these plants with other gardeners.

What would be your best piece of advice to someone wanting to start a micro-nursery? First do some experimenting with the types of plants you think you might want to specialise in and ensure there is a market for them. I tested ten to 20 different plant species for two years to see which ones worked best for me. Secondly, during this period, start creating the website, business name, and start to build up website credibility with Google. You need to spend time creating quality content that will rank well on the search site. Websites such as Wix and Squarespace where you can design a website are good places to start.

What do you do alongside running your micro-nursery? I have a full-time job so I run the business in evenings and at weekends. It's hard work, especially with a young family. I am home every evening though and I can tend to the plants especially late into the summer evenings.

What are your hopes for the future of your micro-nursery? While the business continues to grow and build good credibility, I am currently restricted by space to grow any more plants in my current back garden setup. I hope to acquire a larger space but can't see it becoming my primary job role for some time. Until then, I will continue to juggle both my full-time role and plant business in evenings and weekends. I am just pleased it has been successful and my contacts and credibility continues to grow.

Plants are available through online mail order at exoticearthplants.co.uk

#1 Three top tips for starting a micro-nursery

Take the time to invest in a good website for your burgeoning business. Research the basics of SEO (search engine optimisation) to get your website ranking well on search sites. Or, start by selling your plants via social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. You can sell but also network with like-minded plants people and businesses.

GreenKoos Nursery

Alongside garden maintenance jobs, Keef Longs keeps a nursery of tropical plants, grown in his small garden in east Manchester

'If you've got a wooden shed with a till in it and a polytunnel or two you've got a nursery'

What does your micro-nursery specialise in? I've fallen into specialising in *Brugmansia* including *Brugmansia arborea* (see above), which is better known as angel's trumpet or tree thorn-apple, and I am accumulating other vaguely tropical plants from the nightshade family such as the highly underrated genus *Iochroma*.

And why these particular plants? I like anything with nice big leaves or interesting enough to make even non-plants people stop and look. I must confess though, I've started propagating hardy shrubs again – just the ones I like. Which is most of them.

What encouraged you or inspired you to start your nursery? One of my first jobs in horticulture was at Pine Lodge Gardens in St Austell, Cornwall. The nursery was supplied by plants propagated from the collection in the garden with only a small proportion of plants imported. The shop bit was some tables protected from the weather and a wooden shed with a till in it. It showed that if you've got that and a polytunnel or two you have a nursery, and if you can also sell people tea and cake you have a successful nursery. I'm still aspiring to the cake stage.

What do you do alongside running your micro-nursery? Most of my income still comes from garden maintenance. I have around a dozen gardens that I tend to and some of them make for useful extra nursery capacity. I think the nursery will have to take over in the next few years.

What would be your best piece of advice to someone wanting to start a micro-nursery? Find a niche and stick to it. It's tough trying to compete with the big fish or established specialists on regular garden perennials or hardy shrubs, but if you can become the go-to person in your range you'll always have people seeking you out. More generally, try to be a bit zen with it – understand where your plants fit into the matrix of life and you'll develop a greater affinity that will help you grow them better.

What are your hopes for the future of your micro-nursery? I'd like to make the jump from micro to little nursery supplied by a garden open to the public, and mostly keep sending out my pretty little friends for adoption. Ultimately an Eden-project sized garden with a lake… and a tea shop obviously. **Keef's plants are available to buy online at greenkoos.co.uk**

#2

Do some market research. Find out what plants are in demand and who is fulfilling this demand. If you plan to cultivate rare and unusual species, all the better, as you won't be up against the bigger nurseries producing classic favourites and traditional perennials.

Gardener's Cottage Plants

Originally an electrical engineer, Andrew Davenport now looks after a perennial, herb and wildflower nursery in the Northumberland countryside

'It was a lack of nurseries supplying plants grown organically that spurred me on'

What does your micro-nursery specialise in? We mainly supply perennials, herbs and wildflowers.

And why these particular plants? As well as common species, we aim to include rare and unusual species as well as varieties of popular plants.

What encouraged you or inspired you to start your nursery? Essentially it was through the love of plants and it evolved from bringing on plants for the garden and selling the surplus. I also wanted to do things sustainably and organically. I believe that plants grown organically, in a living, compost-based media, will be more robust and healthier and adapt better to the soil when planted out. It was a lack of nurseries supplying plants grown in this way which spurred me on.

What do you do alongside running your micro-nursery? In 2008 I wrote a book about quick return (QR) composting, and following that I set up a composting education business. In 2010 we set up a gardening business and we still run that, and the composting work, alongside the nursery – there is an overlap between the three, so it works well. We also open our garden to attract more visitors to the nursery. Before all this I was an electrical engineer.

What would be your best piece of advice to someone wanting to start a micro-nursery? Take a low-risk approach and keep overheads to a minimum. We do virtually all the work ourselves, so wages are kept low. We also make our own composts, use recycled pots, save water where possible and make our own labels so material costs are low. Sustainability is good for the environment but also usually good for your pocket. It's also important to have a unique selling point or attraction.

What are your hopes for the future of your micro-nursery? We purchased some nearby land six years ago where we are aiming to get the nursery established in the longer term. By which time we will have gained more experience and will hopefully have the right systems and market in place to make it work. We hope to establish a nursery as well as an organic gardening education and training facility.

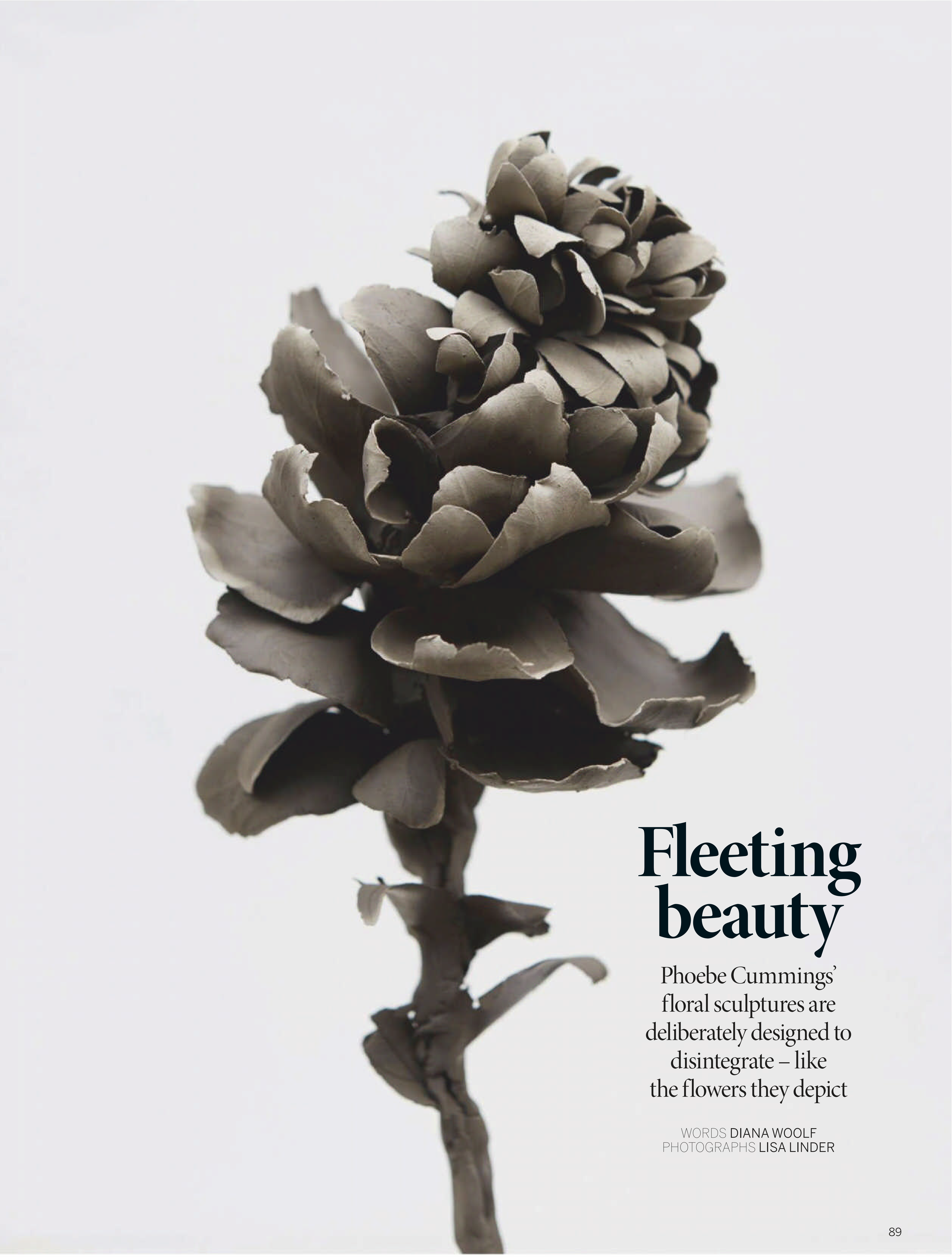
Gardener's Cottage Plants nursery is open 10am-4pm, Friday to Saturday. Bingfield, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE19 2LE. gcplants.co.uk

#3

There are many reasons to take an environmental and sustainable approach to growing your plants and your business. But if you go down the route of making your own compost, pots, labels and starting with a local delivery system, you'll not only reduce your carbon footprint, you'll save money too.

This image Artist Phoebe Cummings in her Staffordshire studio. Although her large-scale works – such as *Triumph of the Immaterial,* which won the *Woman's Hour* Craft Prize in 2017 – are assembled on site, she makes smaller components such as this in the studio.

Facing page Each of Phoebe's sculptures is made of raw, unfired clay and is highly fragile; the clay is continually evolving and as it dries it changes colour and consistency until eventually it disintegrates completely and is re-used in a new piece.



Fleeting beauty

Phoebe Cummings' floral sculptures are deliberately designed to disintegrate – like the flowers they depict

WORDS DIANA WOOLF
PHOTOGRAPHS LISA LINDER

I love the directness of clay, the way you don't need anything between you and the material, and the way it responds to every touch

Facing page Phoebe's sculptures are a fantastical combination of the real and the imagined as in this *Paleozoic Bouquet* based on prehistoric plants.

Above Phoebe works instinctively and usually only has a rough plan of how the finished piece will look.

Right Phoebe mainly uses simple tools or her hands to model the clay.

Far right The larger sculptures are built up with numerous smaller flowerheads and plant forms positioned around a frame.

Unusually for an artist, Phoebe Cummings makes work that is deliberately designed to disintegrate. She creates large-scale, site-specific sculptures specially commissioned for temporary exhibitions. Her elaborate, fantastical plant forms are made out of clay, but instead of firing it, Phoebe leaves the clay in its raw state so that it dries out, gradually shrinking, cracking and finally collapsing into fragments that can be reused. Phoebe relishes this re-cycling process and says, "I really enjoy the possibility for the material itself to endlessly be remade." The brief life cycle of each piece gives her work a particular poignancy: "It is similar to the feeling you get when plants come and go; it's not a mourning as you enjoy those different moments in the plant's life, even though when it's more decayed there might be a sadder beauty."

Phoebe started working with raw clay when she left the Royal College of Art in 2005 after completing an MA in ceramics. It was a practical decision as, at the time, she couldn't afford to buy new materials, let alone a kiln, and working with raw clay meant that she was able to continually wet down the clay and reuse it. However, this process soon became an integral part of her work as it allowed Phoebe to create what she calls performative sculpture. "When I stop making the work it continues to perform," she says, explaining, "As the clay dries there are a lot of changes – there's colour change and the texture and humidity starts to change – it's not a static thing as it might be dissolving or shrinking or cracking as the clay has a life of its own."

Phoebe's inspiration often comes from the commissioning institution as she researches the museum's collections for motifs she can translate into clay. She is drawn to the over-blown exuberance of Rococo designers such as Jean-Baptiste Pillement and often ▷

Botanical illustrations and pattern books are useful sources of inspiration, although Phoebe will also dissect plants from her garden to work out their structure.

Finding plants in an urban environment felt like a moment of magic

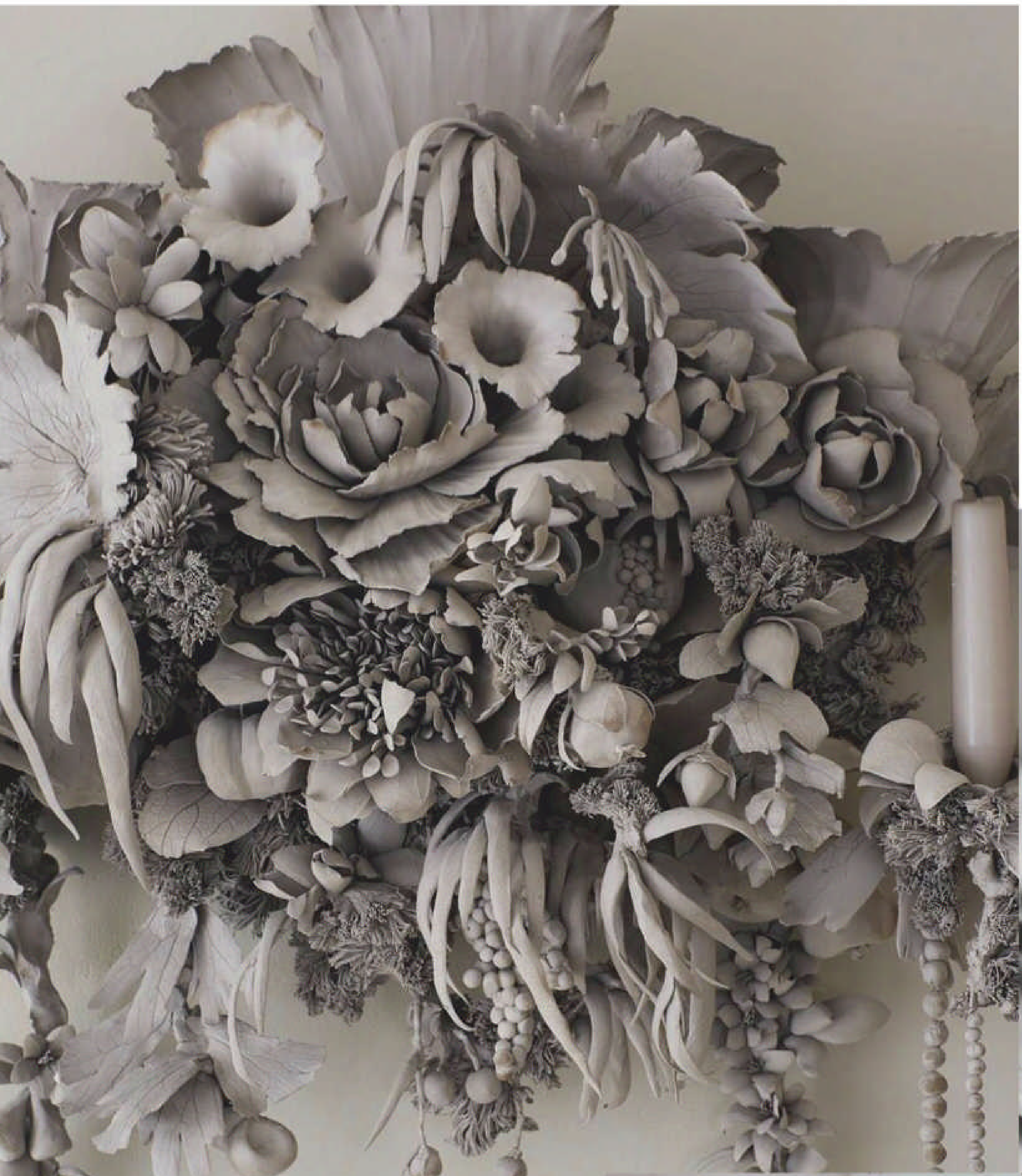
▷ combines their imagined floral designs with real species, enjoying the ability to make horticulturally "impossible" combinations. These might include species from different geographical locations, or rare plants that you would never normally be able to pick: "The clay allows me to build combinations that in the real world are quite problematic." She may also include endangered species, the ephemeral nature of her sculptures echoing the sense of loss these plants provoke. Like many of these endangered plants, once the exhibition is finished, the sculptures can only be experienced on film, although future plans include working out new ways of recording the work before it disintegrates.

Given the complexity of her sculptures, Phoebe's making process is relatively simple. The larger works start with some form of armature, and then, working instinctively, she gradually builds up the piece with individual components, each one delicately modelled by hand. By adding layers of small flowers and leaves, Phoebe avoids the problems caused by the way the clay shrinks as it dries, one of the main challenges her making process involves. Few tools are involved and she says: "I love the directness of clay, the way you don't need anything between you and the material, and the way it responds to every touch." It's a labour-intensive, craft-based way of working, even though the results are more sculpture than traditional ceramics.

Phoebe has lived in Staffordshire on and off since she was a child, and believes that living in an area where there was a strong sense of the landscape being shaped by materials and making was an unconscious influence. More important was how it shaped her relationship with nature: "The fact that it was quite an industrial area meant that nature was something exotic, finding plants in this urban environment felt like a moment of magic." And it is this sense of magical wonder that she so skilfully captures in her work, transforming the fragile, fleeting beauty of nature into equally fragile, beautiful sculptures. □

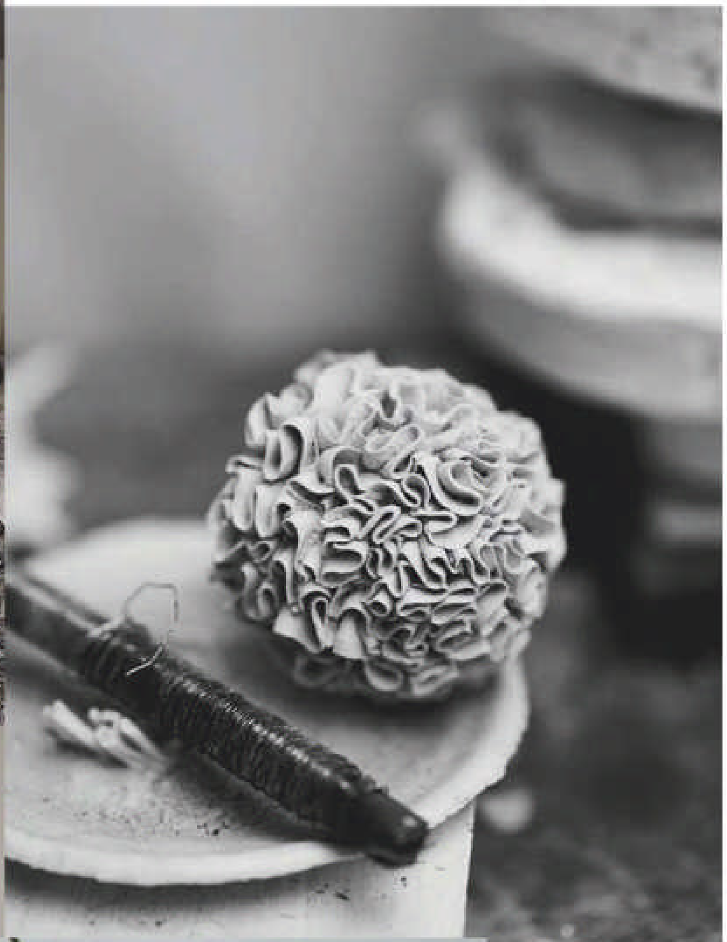
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Phoebe's work at phoebecummings.com



Left There is a whiff of Miss Havisham's wedding bouquet to this wall sconce that captures the particular poignancy of Phoebe's work.

Below Phoebe skilfully captures the fragility of the natural world in clay.



Left Using a fine, smooth clay allows Phoebe to achieve an extraordinary level of delicacy, as in this peony.

Above Plants, moulds and shells all have their place in Phoebe's studio.

10 great online gardening courses

A new year is the perfect time to learn a new skill or even think about starting a new career, and while we may still be confined to our homes this doesn't have to limit our ambitions. There are hundreds of courses you can study from the comfort of your own home. So whether you're considering retraining, looking for inspiration for your pots and borders or simply want to give your houseplants some loving care, here is a round-up of some of the best online courses to try

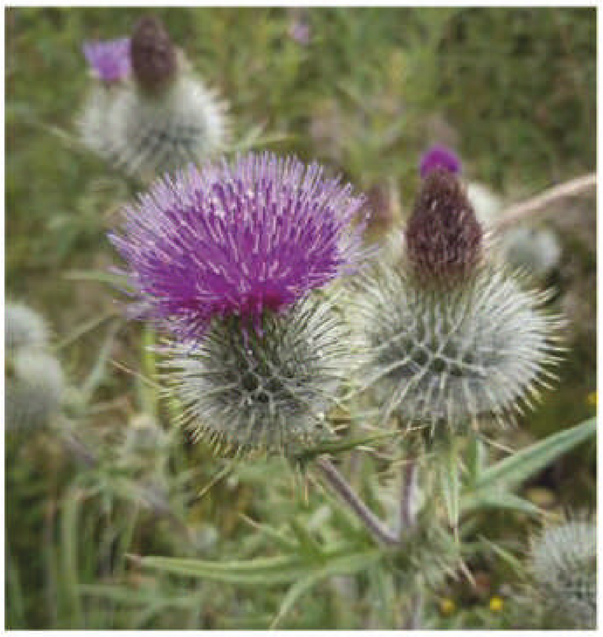
1 Best for absolute beginners

Ron Finley Teaches Gardening,
MasterClass

Ron Finley the self-proclaimed Gangster Gardener has long been a rebel with a cause. His clash with LA City Council over the kerbside garden he'd planted in the south of the city led to a change in the city's by-laws and set Ron on an edible gardening crusade. Now he's joined the distinguished list of tutors for online school MasterClass with a ten-part gardening course. Although the emphasis is on growing your own food, Ron offers a great all-round introduction with advice on transforming nutrient-poor soil into fertile ground, propagation and turning whatever you have to hand, from a boot to a drawer, into a planter.

Each module lasts between eight and 20 minutes, making the course ideal to fit around other commitments, and comes with a downloadable PDF workbook.

MasterClass is a subscription-based platform that costs £170 a year and gives you unlimited access to all of its courses, so you can also take cooking classes with Yotam Ottolenghi, acting lessons from Natalie Portman or get writing tips from Neil Gaiman. The minimum subscription is for a year but if you decide it's not for you, MasterClass offers a full refund within the first 30 days of purchase. **masterclass.com**



2 Best for budding botanists

Getting Started With… Botany,
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

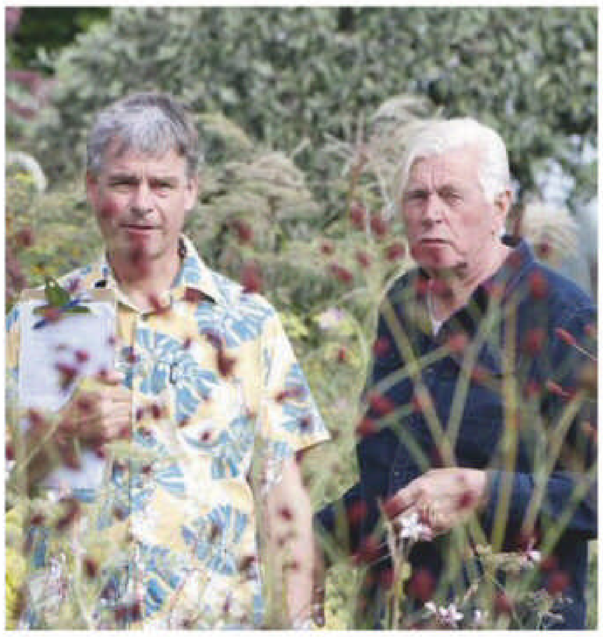
If you've ever wondered what exactly is going on inside a plant or want to know more about the amazing diversity of plants on the planet then maybe a course on basic botany is for you. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh offers a short online course that works both as an introduction to its certificate and diploma in botany and is also an engaging and comprehensive introduction to the subject in itself.

The course is self-guided with tutor support through nine units that cover topics such as plant diversity, seeds, plant processes, roots and stems, leaves, plant reproduction and botanical classification, with tips on plant identification and an introduction to the investigative skills a botanist requires. Alongside the online learning there are also some fun practical tasks to complete in your own time.

The cost is £80, which gives you access to all materials and support for six months so you can work through the units at your own pace. There is some crossover with the RHS Level 2 Certificate unit on plant classification, structure, and function, but this course is more practical and less theoretical. **rbge.org.uk**

1 COURTESY OF MASTERCLASS; 2 RGBE; 3 LEARNING WITH EXPERTS; 4 THE PRETTIEST POSY; 5 JASON INGRAM.

Jimi is the infectiously enthusiastic tutor for three excellent online courses that look in detail at his favourite plants



3 Best for perfecting perennial borders

Planting the Piet Oudolf Way,
Learning with Experts

For more experienced gardeners who are looking to expand their knowledge, Learning with Experts has an excellent selection of specialist, garden-related courses from flower photography to natural beekeeping. One of the highlights is this opportunity to learn at the feet of New Perennial master Piet Oudolf. Co-hosted by Noel Kingsbury and filmed in Piet's own garden, Hummelo, when it's at its peak in September, Planting the Piet Oudolf Way is divided into four sections that explore plant structure, plant combinations, seasonality and planting by region – all with corresponding assignments to follow in your own time.

You can start the course whenever you want and take part in an online interactive classroom of no more than 20 other students with whom you can group chat and direct message in a collaborative learning environment. There are two price options: the Peer option costs £35 and comes with lifetime access to the videos, notes and online classroom, while the Expert option for £165 also includes four weeks of access to Noel, who will guide you through the course and provide personal feedback on your planting plans, and you'll also receive a certificate of completion. **learningwithexperts.com**

4 Best for having fun with floral displays

In Bloom,
The Prettiest Posy

Now that we're all spending much more time in our homes than we would ideally like, most of us are looking for ways to make our living space that little bit more joyful. Yorkshire-based writer and stylist Sophie Warren-Smith has put together a short floristry course that can give even the most uncrafty the confidence to add a floral flourish to their homes.

Her short course costs just £24 and includes four easy-to-follow floral projects – an on-trend mantle arrangement, a spring table arrangement, a flower crown and a spring wall-hanging, all of which make use of seasonal flowers from your garden, such as hellebores, tulips and daffodils, combined with whatever you can forage while out and about. The only other supplies you'll need are florist's wire and tape. And perhaps a smartphone so you can post your creations on Instagram. **theprettiestposy.co.uk**

5 Best for plant fanatics

Online Gardening Course with Jimi Blake,
Hunting Brook Gardens

Jimi Blake, our new plant columnist (see page 22), is one of Ireland's best-known gardeners, who for the past 20 years has been rewriting the rules on how to combine plants at his Hunting Brook Gardens, south of Dublin. Jimi is also the infectiously enthusiastic tutor for three excellent online courses: Late Spring to Early Summer; High Summer; and Autumn.

Each course is divided into four modules in which Jimi looks in detail at some of his favourite plants, from delicate erythroniums to exotic eucomis, and offers insights into how he chooses plants and combines them so successfully in borders. There is also plenty of practical advice on topics such as propagation and taking root cuttings.

The cost of each course is €120 (or €295 for all three), and this gives you six months' access not only to the instructional videos – all filmed at Hunting Brook – but to Jimi's detailed plant notes that distil a lifetime of experience. This month Jimi is also launching a series of monthly masterclasses that will focus on a specific plant. The first of these goes out live on 25 February at 7pm, followed by a Q&A, and then at the same time on the last Thursday of every month until November. The webinars cost €25 (or €15 to rent post event) each, or you can sign up to all ten for €100. **huntingbrook.com**

James helps to dispel much of the mystery around keeping houseplants happy, which is often less complicated than we imagine

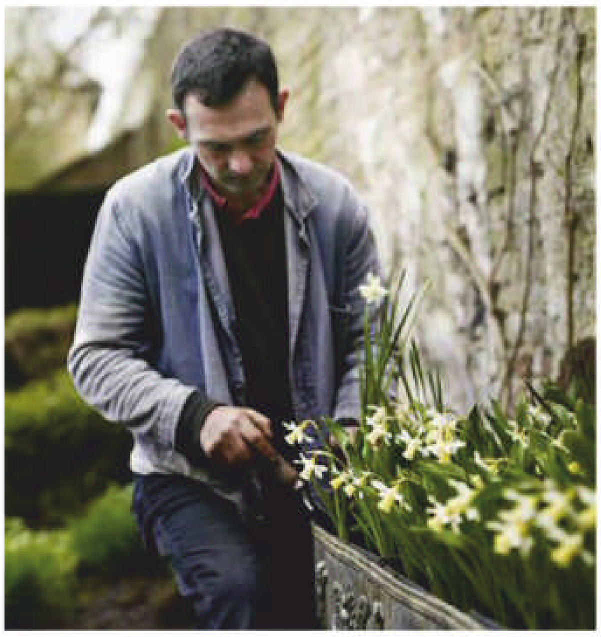
6 Best for growing your own

No Dig Gardening and Growing Success,
Charles Dowding

One of the positives to have come out of lockdown is that more of us have realised the benefits of growing our own food. But if you're serious about self-sufficiency, or just want to improve on next year's crops, then a little learning goes a long way, especially if your tutor is Charles Dowding.

Charles has long been one of the leading exponents of no dig gardening, which he says will not only save you time, but is also an easy way of enhancing soil drainage, moisture retention and root health. His online course No Dig Gardening is a thorough introduction to the subject aimed at beginners and experienced gardeners alike. The 19 lessons are divided into six modules that show you how to eradicate weeds, feed soil, make compost, and create cropping plans for small spaces.

The companion course, Growing Success, provides more in-depth advice on growing vegetables, with lessons on seeds and sowing, spacing, succession planting, and how and when to harvest. The courses cost £150 each (or £225 for both), which gives you a lifetime access to all course materials. **charlesdowding.co.uk**



7 Best for container planting

Planting Containers for Late Spring and
Summer Interest, Garden Masterclass

Alongside the many longer courses available, there are numerous excellent talks and lectures to help you get creative in the garden. For those with limited outdoor space, or anyone who wants to get creative with their container displays, this one-hour masterclass from Troy Scott Smith as part of the Garden Masterclass webinar series is a must. Currently head gardener at Iford Manor in Wiltshire, Troy has also been head gardener at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent and Bodnant in north Wales and is an expert in creating beautiful container displays. Troy will discuss combining plants for maximum impact, starting with early spring bulbs, through narcissi and tulips, to early summer displays of annuals and perennials. He'll also offer advice on the basics of pot selection, compost and placement of pots and containers in the garden for best effect, along with practical tips on deadheading, staking, feeding, successional planting. The webinar will be live on 5 March, 6-7pm, with the chance to ask Troy a question, for £24, but you will be able to rent a recording for a month at any time for £12. **gardenmasterclass.org**

8 Best for getting started in design

Design Your Own Garden,
Inchbald School of Design

Whether you're considering a career in garden design or just want to come up with a plan for your own personal sanctuary, a short garden design course is a great place to start. Design Your Own Garden from Inchbald School of Design is a flexible, 12-week online course that takes you step-by-step through the design process. You'll explore concepts of colour, form and texture, learn about using hard landscaping, structures and water features, and by the end you'll have a design for your own space with a planting plan specifically suited to your garden conditions.

Courses are held termly (the next one begins on 26 April) and you'll need to commit to around four hours each week. Throughout the 12-week period, you'll receive specialist guidance and advice from an assigned personal tutor, as well as unlimited access to course materials and discussion forums where you can exchange ideas with other students and your tutor.

The course isn't cheap at £1,260, but Inchbald is an SGD-approved educator with hugely experienced teaching staff, and this is a course that will equip you with the both confidence and skills to study for a diploma or degree. It will also help you decide if garden design is the career for you before investing in a longer course. **inchbald.co.uk**

6 &7 ANDREW MONTGOMERY; 8 GRAHAM CARLOW / INCHBALD; 9 DEBORAH GRACE PHOTOGRAPHY.

9 Best for the houseplant nervous

The House Plant Revolution James Wong's Guide to Indoor Gardening, Create Academy

Can houseplants really help turn our homes into healthier, happier places? The eminently likeable ethnobotanist James Wong seems to think so; he is so enthusiastic he shares his flat with 500 of them. He's also devised a course for the online creative school Create Academy that helps to dispel much of the mystery around keeping them happy, which as he points out is often less complicated than we imagine, especially once we understand the importance of light and how best to water them.

Divided into 20 different lessons, the course includes advice on caring for different groups of houseplants, such as succulents and cacti, ferns and orchids, how to mimic different habitats from Bornean rainforest canopies to Amazonian rivers, how to plant up a terrarium and a living wall, and where best to source your plants.

This is a new course that launches later this month (15 February) and will normally cost £127 for unlimited lifetime access, but if you sign up between 1-14 February you can buy for the discounted price of £107.95. **createacademy.com/james-wong**

10 Best for career changers

RHS Level 2 Qualifications, BEST in Horticulture

Perhaps the start of a new year has made you think about a career change and the possibility of turning your hobby into a business. There are many routes into careers in both gardening and garden design but whatever career path you choose, to take your first step should be to firm up your plant knowledge by studying for the RHS Level 2 Certificates. You can find details of colleges that run the courses on the RHS website (rhs.org.uk) and there are now several providers that allow you study for the course online.

The Midlands-based horticultural school BEST in Horticulture offers both the RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Garden Planning, Establishment and Maintenance and the Certificate in the Principles of Plant Growth, Propagation and Development as online options. Both are divided into four modules and cost £264 (excluding exam fees) for all four, or £72 for an individual module. Enrolment gives you online access and tutor support for two years, or until the final examinations, and access to an online classroom for each unit with downloadable course notes, revision workbooks, past paper questions and online self-test quizzes. **bestinhorticulture.co.uk**

OTHER COURSES

With so many talks and workshops moving online, there's never been a better time to learn something new

Designing The Future With Trees
A season of weekly Info Bursts from the London College of Garden Design. Each of the online talks, starting with Keith Sacre of Barcham Trees, will explore the role trees play in design provide ideas and inspiration for garden designers and garden enthusiasts alike. 9 February – 2 March, 5-6.30pm, £6 per talk. lcgd.org.uk

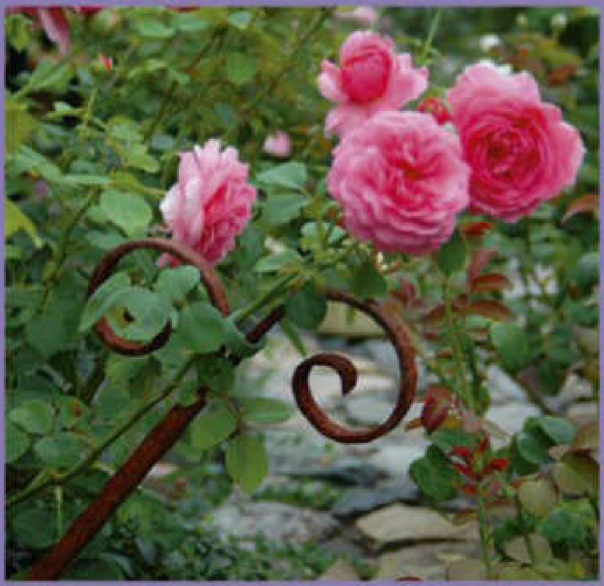
Creative garden writing
Garden writer Jackie Bennett leads a half-day online workshop from the Cambridge University Botanic Garden that will help you to use gardens and the natural world to unlock your writing 'voice'. 3 March, 10am-1pm, £40. botanic.cam.ac.uk

Botanical Watercolor for Beginners and Beyond
Learn how to paint botanical watercolours in this five-week course from the New York Botanical Garden. Suitable for both beginners and those wanting to improve their skills, it's taught through lectures and individual instruction. 8 March – 5 April, 10am-2:30pm EST (3-7.30pm GMT), $379. enrole.com/nybg

The Early 18th-Century English Garden
This five-week course from the Garden Historians will be taught on Zoom from May will trace the development of garden design from the formality of the Dutch garden designs of William and Mary at Kensington Palace and Hampton Court through the work of Charles Bridgeman to the classical Arcadian landscapes of William Kent, 7-28 May, 6-7.15pm, £135. thegardenhistorians.co.uk

English Garden Supplies

American Made, English Style



For The Passionate American Gardener

Heirloom Garden Tools * Plant Supports * Border Edging

EnglishGardenSupplies.com

Adderley Travel

small group garden tours for garden lovers everywhere

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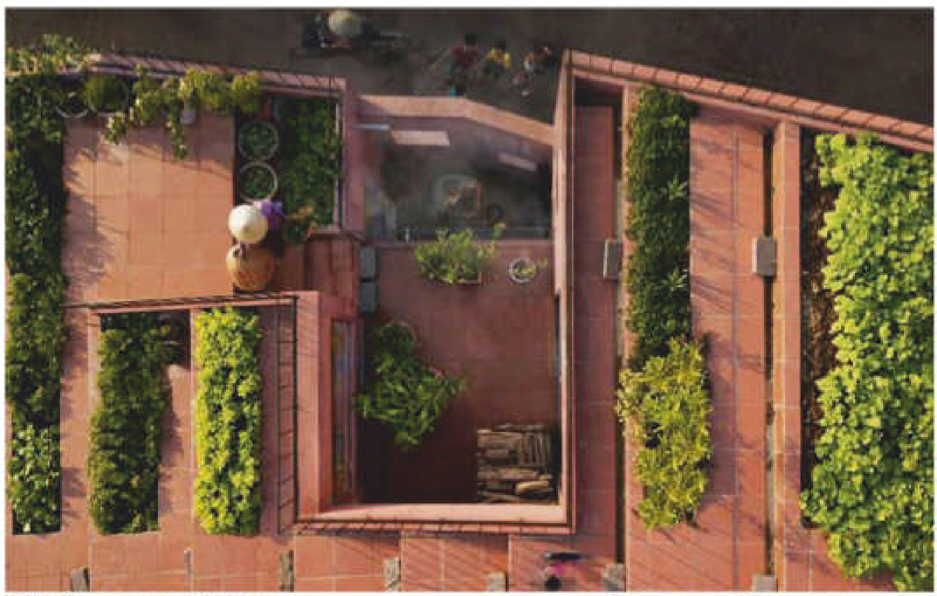
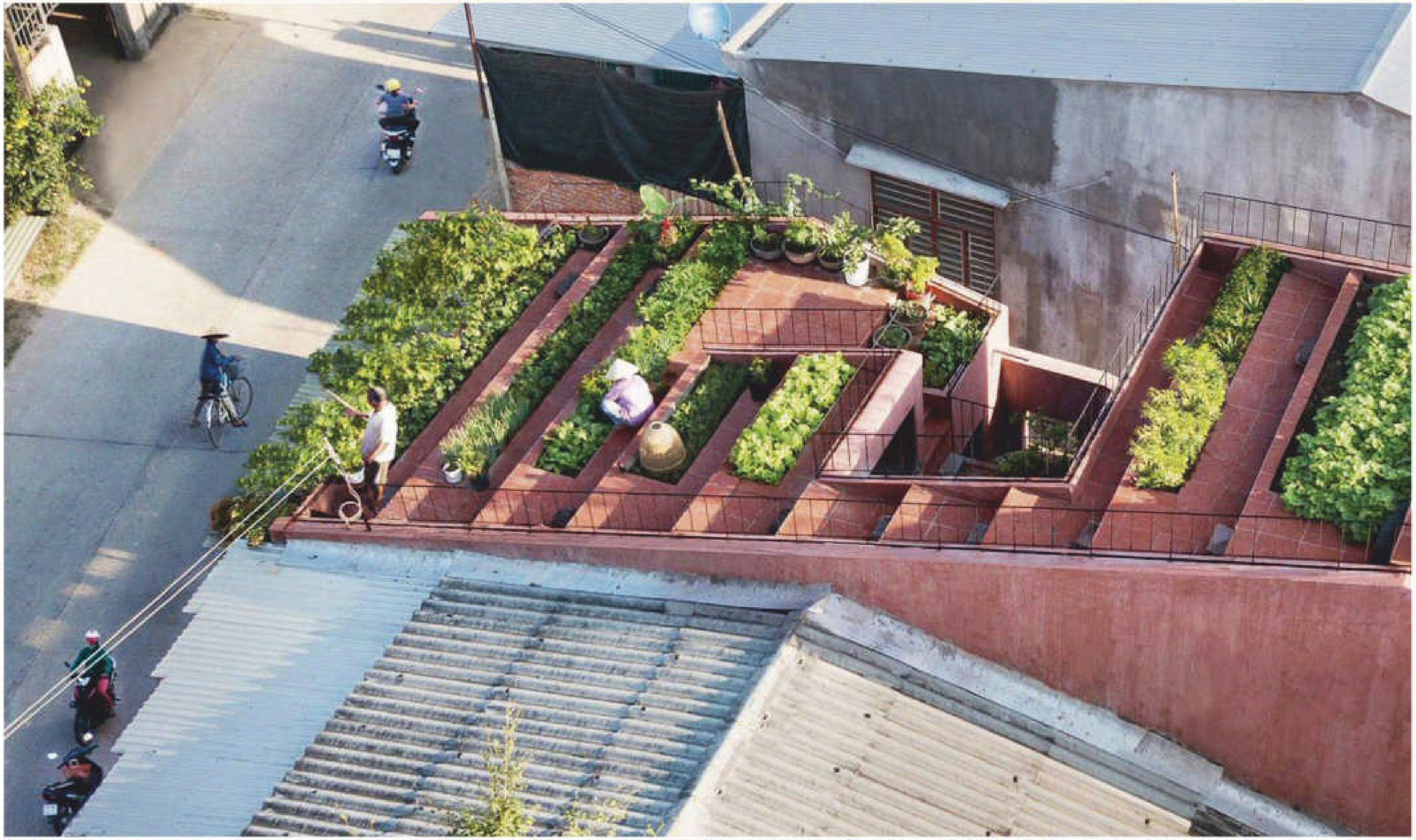
Design

News and sourcebook





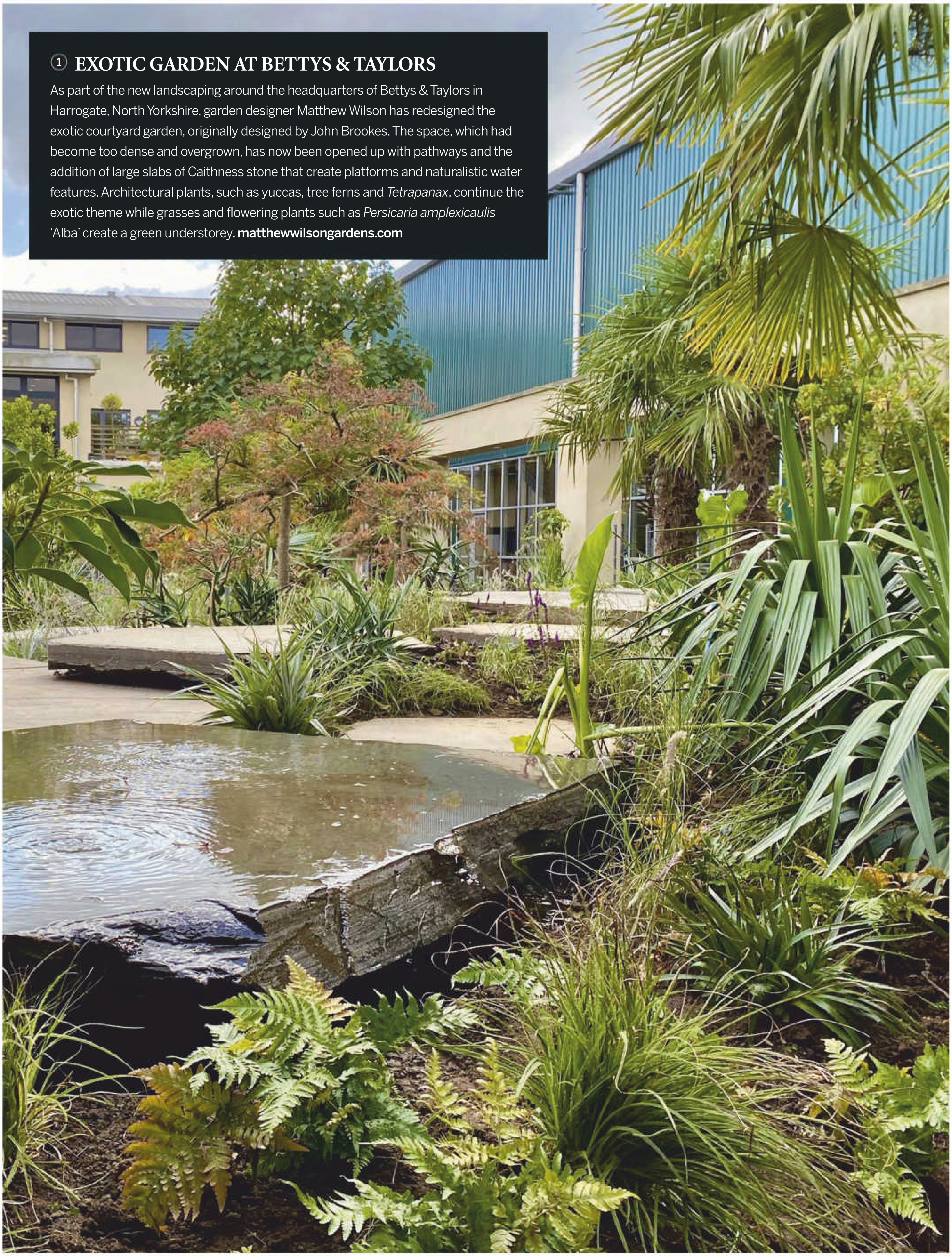
STEPPING UP

A Vietnamese village house designed around a series of courtyards, with a stepped roof garden fitted with planters for growing vegetables, has won the Architecture Project of the Year at the Dezeen Awards 2020 and the award for Green Architecture in the Architecture MasterPrize Awards 2020. Designed by architecture, interior and landscape design office TAA Design, the planted rooftop, which is accessed by a set of steps ascending from a mezzanine terrace, insulates the house more effectively than would a more widely used corrugated iron roof. The courtyards provide outdoor spaces for traditional activities, such as rice drying, keeping chickens and making bicycle repairs. **taadesign.com**

TAA DESIGN

News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



① EXOTIC GARDEN AT BETTYS & TAYLORS

As part of the new landscaping around the headquarters of Bettys & Taylors in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, garden designer Matthew Wilson has redesigned the exotic courtyard garden, originally designed by John Brookes. The space, which had become too dense and overgrown, has now been opened up with pathways and the addition of large slabs of Caithness stone that create platforms and naturalistic water features. Architectural plants, such as yuccas, tree ferns and *Tetrapanax*, continue the exotic theme while grasses and flowering plants such as *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Alba' create a green understorey. **matthewwilsongardens.com**

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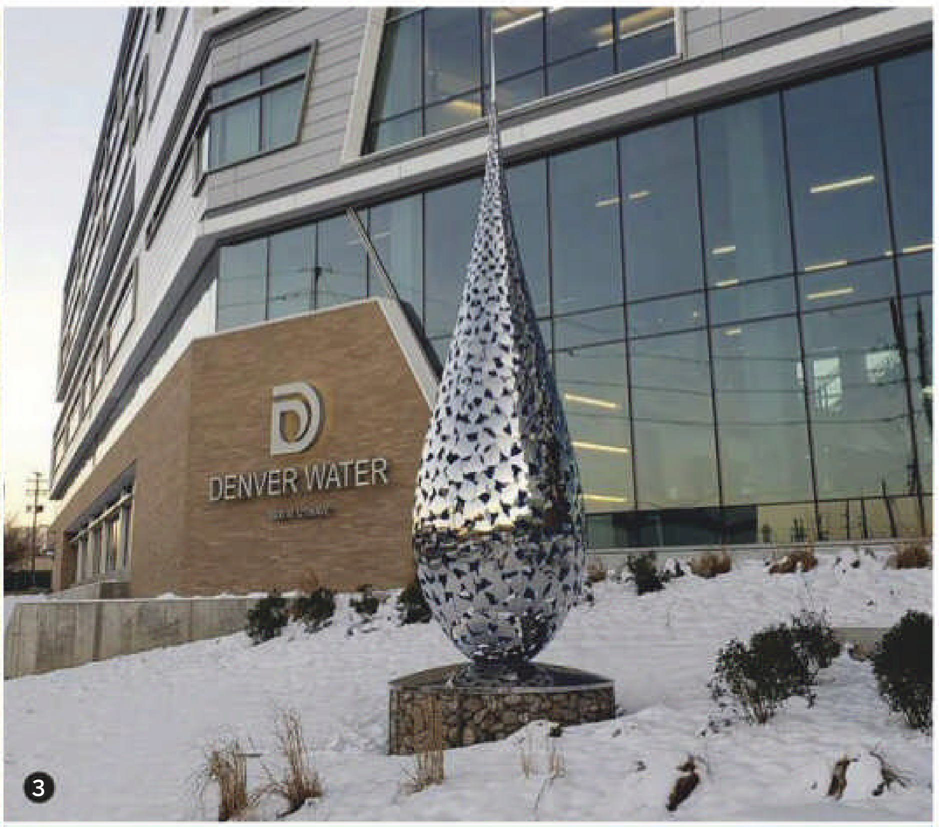

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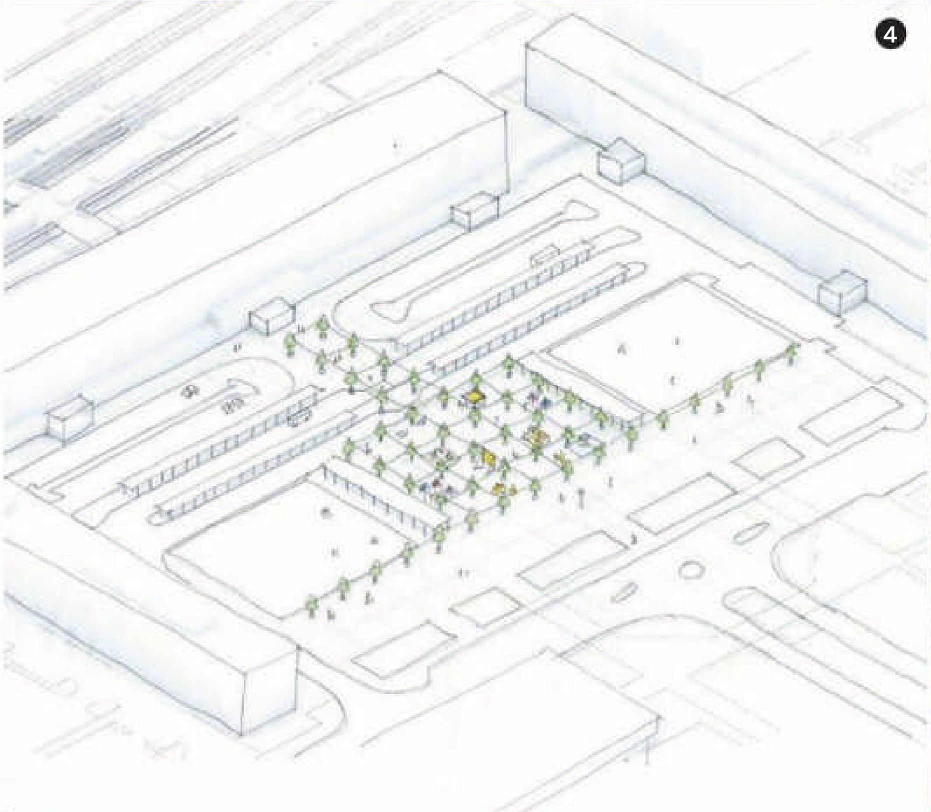

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② TIMBEROUS BEASTIE

A wooden haven for bees that resembles a wild beast has won the Furniture and Product Award in the 2020 Wood Awards. *The Beehave*, by Studio Marlène Huissoud, in collaboration with Benchmark Furniture, was commissioned for London's Science Museum as part of the London Design Festival's Legacy project. Carved from American red oak that is blackened to resemble fur, it is varnished inside and out with propolis, the resinous material made by bees for sealing gaps in their hives, which protects the timber and attracts bees with its scent. **marlene-huissoud.com**

③ MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

Two bespoke sculptures in mirror-polished stainless steel by British sculptor David Harber have been installed at the headquarters of Denver Water in Colorado, USA. *Hydra*, a collection of curved stems rising to 8m high, references the winding watercourses of Denver's South Platte River and its tributary Cherry Creek, while *Water Droplet* (above) is an intricately worked piece representing the essence of water droplets. Harber's new, supersized workshop in Oxfordshire, will enable the sculptor to create more large-scale sculptures. **davidharber.co.uk**

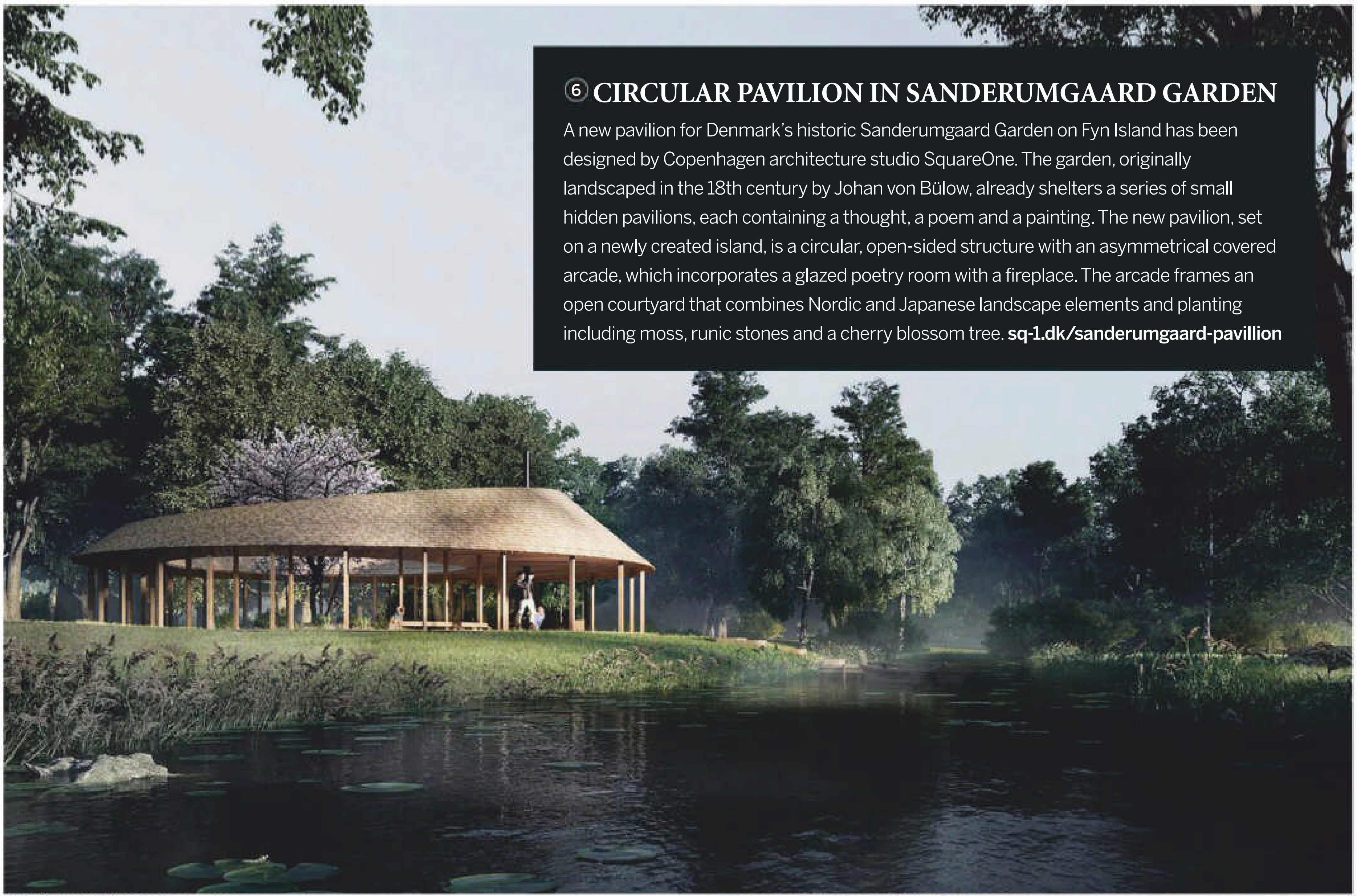
④ STATION INSTALLATION

The winning design for a £100,000 installation next to Milton Keynes railway station in Buckinghamshire has been announced. The modernist public realm of Station Square will be transformed with an installation by London architectural practice Hayatsu Architects and curator Aldo Rinaldi that consists of more than 50 trees and temporary pavilions, which will become venues for events and pop-ups. The grid-like arrangement of the trees references the city's grid road and roundabout system. It will be installed in June this year and will remain on site for two years. **hayatsuarchitects.com**

⑤ LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE AWARD

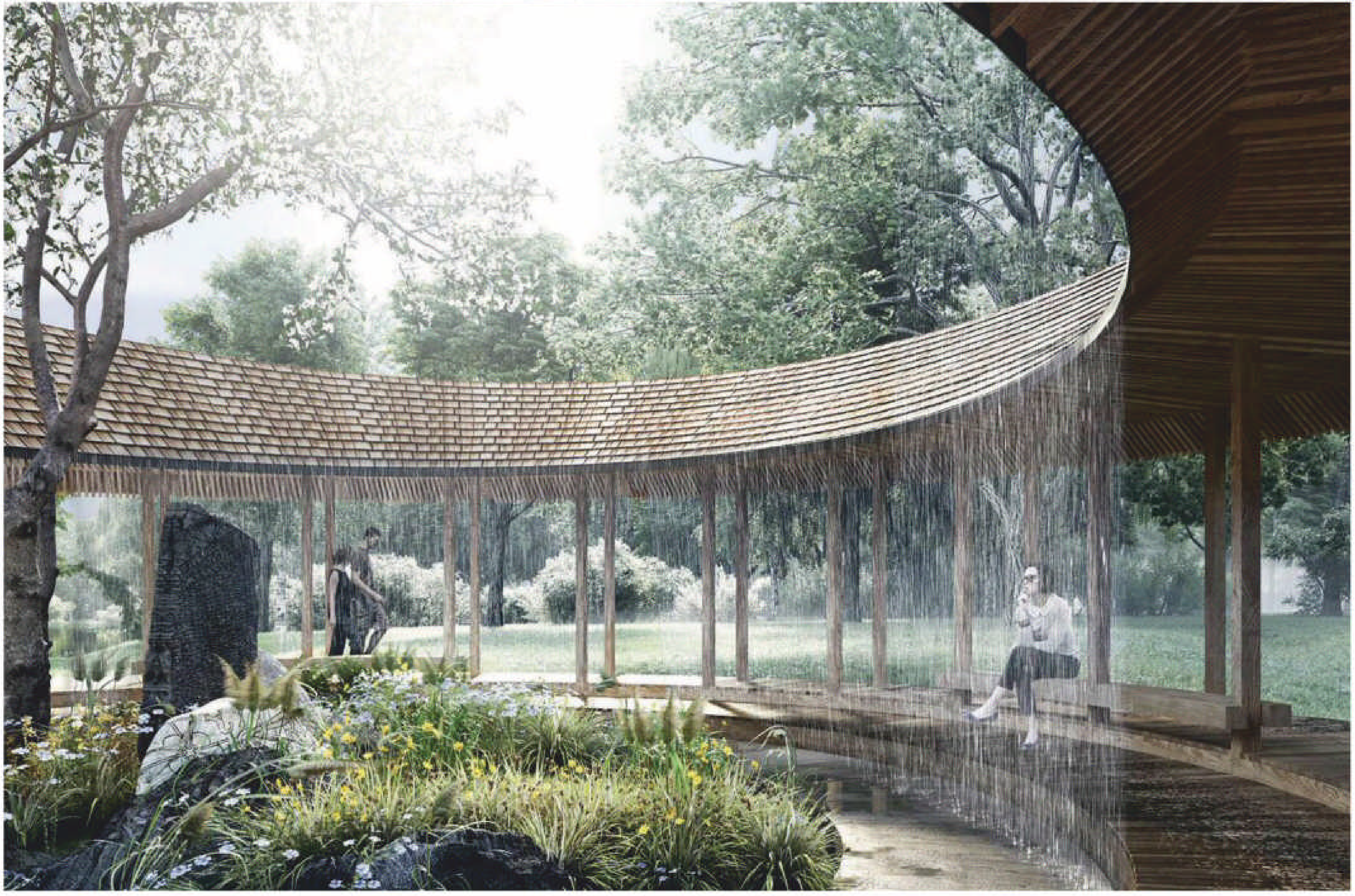
The landscaping of the relocated Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow by the Glasgow studio Erz, has been awarded the Excellence in Landscape Design at the Landscape Institute Awards 2020. Designed in tandem with the new building, the landscape links the hospice to the surrounding Bellahouston Park. A series of seasonal gardens is arranged around an axial path, which incorporates a rill that leads to a pool. Patients' rooms have private gardens and the building is punctuated by shared courtyard spaces. A path leads up the hill to a timber shelter. **erzstudio.co.uk**

5 ERZ LTD.



⑥ CIRCULAR PAVILION IN SANDERUMGAARD GARDEN

A new pavilion for Denmark's historic Sanderumgaard Garden on Fyn Island has been designed by Copenhagen architecture studio SquareOne. The garden, originally landscaped in the 18th century by Johan von Bülow, already shelters a series of small hidden pavilions, each containing a thought, a poem and a painting. The new pavilion, set on a newly created island, is a circular, open-sided structure with an asymmetrical covered arcade, which incorporates a glazed poetry room with a fireplace. The arcade frames an open courtyard that combines Nordic and Japanese landscape elements and planting including moss, runic stones and a cherry blossom tree. **sq-1.dk/sanderumgaard-pavillion**



SQUAREONE

ARGENT RELATED

⑦ BRENT CROSS TOWN

Plans for a 180-acre regeneration scheme in the north London Borough of Barnet, which includes 50 acres of parks and playing fields, have been revealed. Argent Related, the developer behind King's Cross London and New York City's Hudson Yards, has drawn up the plans for Brent Cross Town, which will provide 6,700 new homes, office space for 25,000 employees and state-of-the-art sports and leisure facilities. New pedestrian and cycle routes will connect the town with surrounding communities, and the new Brent Cross West station will provide a 12-minute rail journey to central London. It is expected that the first phase of homes and offices will be occupied from 2024. **argentrelated.co.uk**

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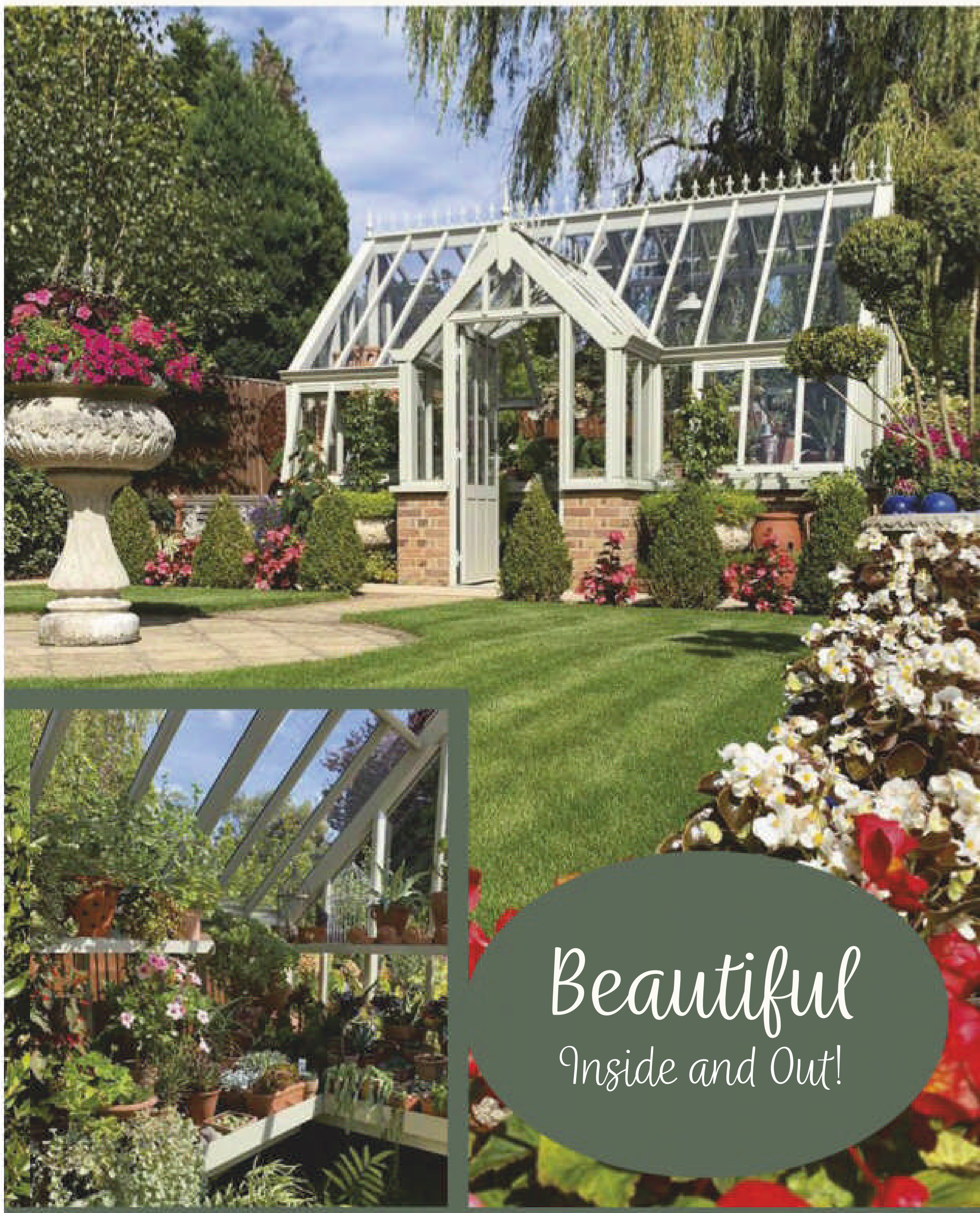

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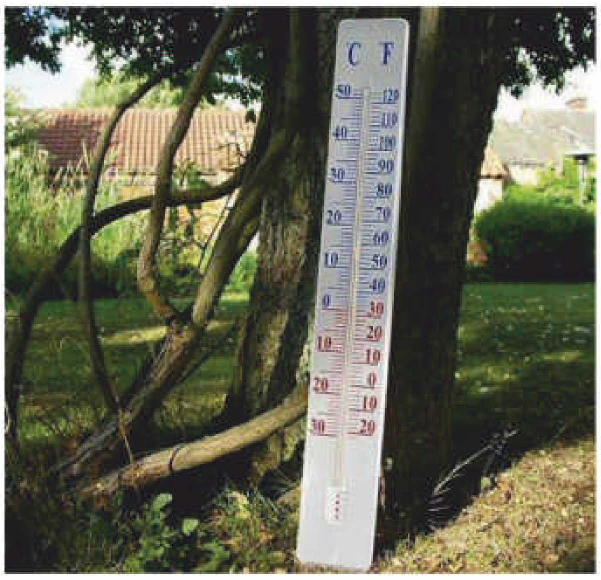

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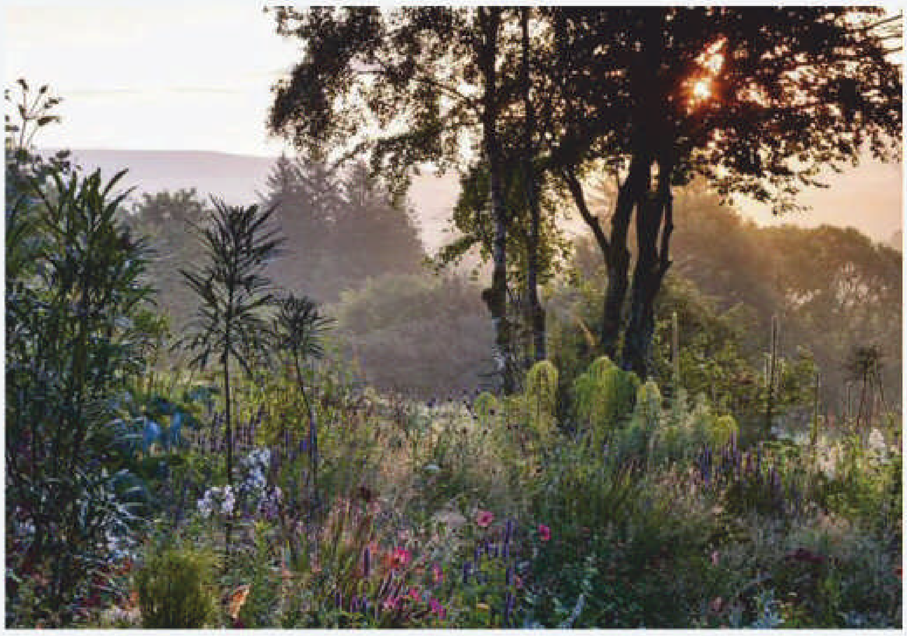
EDUCATION GUIDE

Are you looking to change career, gain accreditation or simply learn more about your passion? Choose the best option for you from this selection of full-time, part-time and short courses.



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Jimi Blake's online gardening classes from Hunting Brook Gardens.

Join renowned plantsman Jimi Blake for his amazing new series of online gardening courses. All courses were filmed at his spectacular Hunting Brook Gardens in Ireland throughout a full year in the garden. Jimi will guide you through all the practical work that he does in Hunting Brook for each season and you will learn the philosophy, techniques, and skills that make Hunting Brook one of the most magical gardens in Ireland. The courses take a detailed look at the plants that Jimi uses in his planting designs, plant combinations, and succession planting. He will introduce you to hundreds of different plants which will take your plant passion to the next level.

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Each course includes beautiful instructional videos for each module and detailed notes that you can down load and keep. You can start the course whenever you like and watch the videos at your own leisure.

These courses are suitable for the enthusiastic amateur and/or the professional horticulturist.

jimi@huntingbrook.com
www.huntingbrook.com

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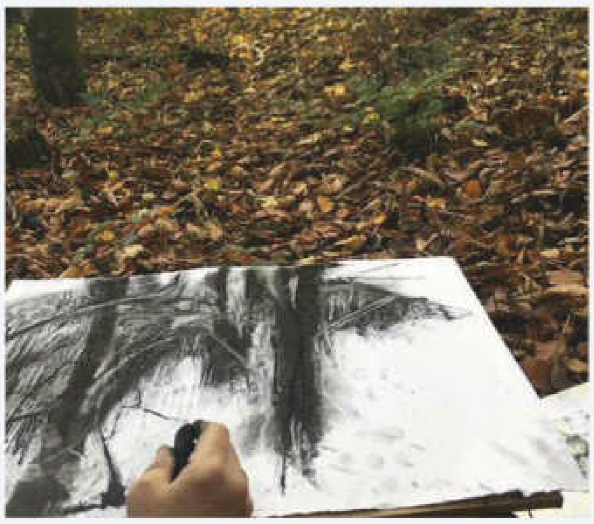
Annie Guilfoyle & Noel Kingsbury are Garden Masterclass

We offer a place to learn, share and experience knowledge, skills and ideas in gardening and landscape design. We aim to bring together gardeners and designers with the very best and most innovative people in the gardening world through one day workshops and online webinars. Each workshop or webinar is organised around a specific topic and designed to help participants learn, create and apply new knowledge and skills.

This is what we offer:

- Live workshops for gardeners, designers and landscape professionals.
- An extensive programme of webinars with recordings available from our online library
- A weekly pro bono broadcast with past recordings on our YouTube channel
- Workshops and lectures with industry leaders such as Tom Stuart Smith, Dan Pearson and Piet Oudolf, as well as rising stars from all over the world.
- We are global events in 2020 have 'taken' us to Pennsylvania, Buenos Aires, Jodhpur, Hokkaido, Atlanta, Chicago, Bergamo, Kiev, Vilnius and Christchurch.

We now have a friends' membership scheme offering priority booking, discounts on curated products and online events and invitations to exclusive live events. Or you can simply register to receive our regular newsletter, to let you know what's coming up. Come and join us!



Garden Masterclass

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THE LONDON COLLEGE OF GARDEN DESIGN

The Viking Cruises Lagom Garden at the 2019 RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival, designed by 2016 graduate Will Williams

Inspiring courses for the garden professional

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Classes take place at the world famous Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, taught by expert tutors who are all practicing professionals and we ensure that our students get the opportunity to take part in inspirational visits and free graduate seminars.

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

Our students have won the majority of Society of Garden Designers Student Awards over the past eight years and regularly graduate to work for some of the world's leading designers. Other opportunities include assisting top designers at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and other shows and our free Graduate programme gives you extra training opportunities and the chance to design gardens in prestigious locations.

OUR PLANTING DESIGN DIPLOMA

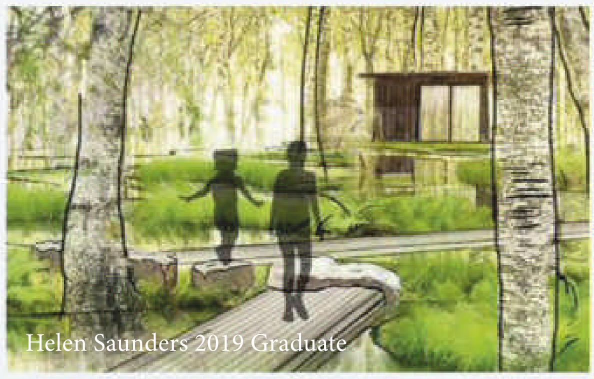
Our six month intensive Planting Design Diploma is for those who already have some experience in landscape architecture, horticulture or gardening and who want to extend their skills in this important aspect of garden design.

Led by Andrew Fisher Tomlin, a Chartered Horticulturist and winner of RHS Best in Show awards, the course supports your passion for planting design with some of the UK's leading planting specialists including Neil Lucas, Carolyn Willitts, Tony Kirkham, Amanda Patton, Nigel Dunnett, Jo Thompson, Kate Gould, Graham Bodle, Marion Mako and Richard Wilford.

SHORT COURSES

As well as our own short courses in Regent's Park we also offer short courses in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society at RHS Garden Wisley and in collaboration with RBG Kew at our home in Kew Gardens. Each course concentrates on a specific element of garden design and is suitable for both professionals and the amateur enthusiast.

For more information please visit our website or contact our administration office on 01483 762 955.



Helen Saunders 2019 Graduate

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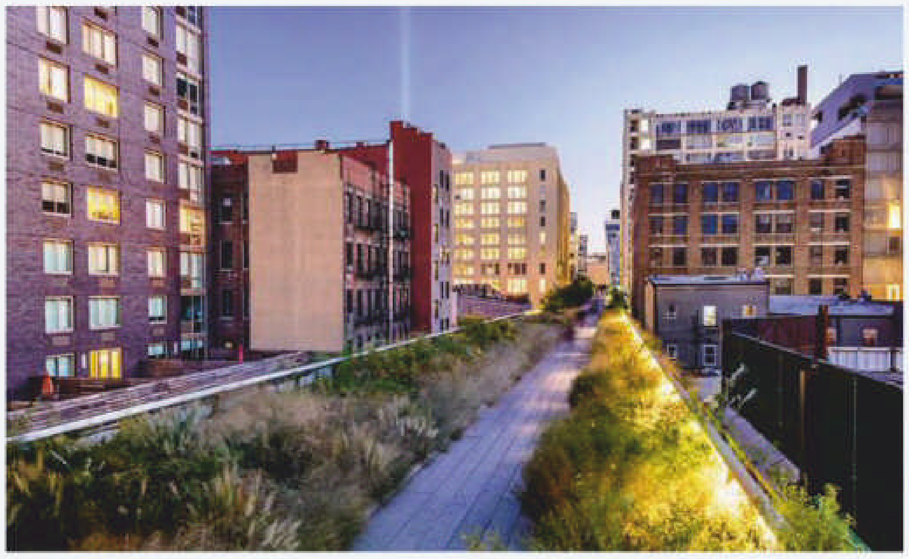

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Patrick Manion, plantsman, Ireland.

Learning with Experts is an approved distance learning provider for The Royal Horticultural Society where you can study for your RHS Level 2 qualification in the Principles of Horticulture as well as offering its online Garden Design Diploma which is rapidly becoming the go to place to study if you want to qualify as a garden designer.

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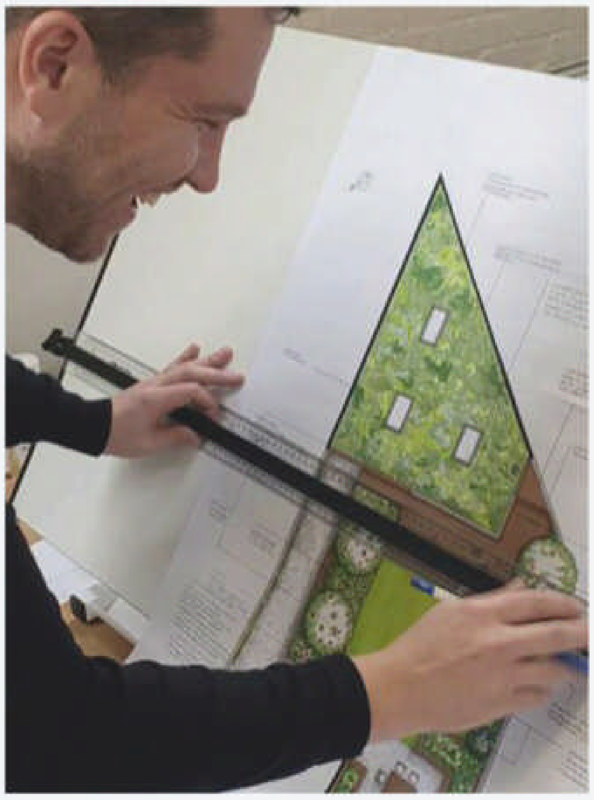

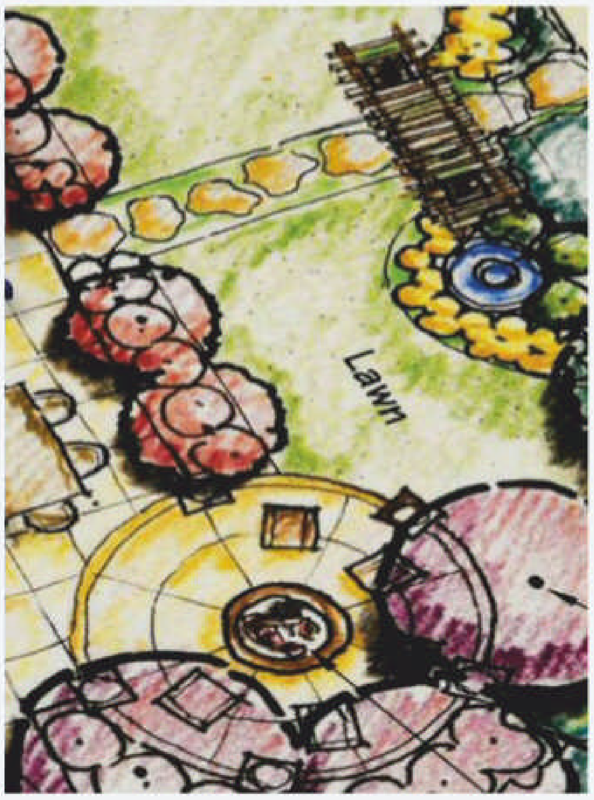

SCOTLAND'S RURAL COLLEGE

Scotland's Rural College offers a range of courses from NC level to Postgraduate in subjects ranging from Horticulture to Garden and Greenspace Design. Students learn at the Edinburgh campus in conjunction with the illustrious Royal Botanical Gardens as well as the stunning Glasgow Botanic Gardens in the city's bohemian West End. With degrees awarded by the University of Glasgow, the institution sees many of its students go on to flourishing careers, with alumni including the *Gardeners' World* presenter Frances Tophill.

Often looking for a change of career path to develop a lingering passion into a lifelong ambition, students on SRUC Horticulture and Garden Design programmes come from a variety of backgrounds. Ewan McKorkindale, studying Horticulture at Glasgow Botanic Gardens, switched from a career as a structural engineer to follow his lifelong interest in plants, he says: "In recent years my appreciation for nature has grown and flourished, much like my plant collection. I enjoy reading about the care and conditions required to make each diverse plant thrive. The chance to gain practical, technical and scientific knowledge from experienced educators is the perfect introduction into the horticulture industry and is what motivated me to study with SRUC along with being at the Botanic Gardens, one of my favourite places, most days is a joy."

After a career in the hospitality industry, the reasons for Krystina Andrlova's decision to study Garden Design in Edinburgh are "Simple yet complex. In my eyes, garden design means creating a piece of art, that consists of pieces of life. Life process fascinates me, and I always wanted to create and help to protect the environment. I think garden design encompasses all of these and so much more." Her plans after graduating are ambitious also, "I would like to get some work experience while studying and after graduation get a job in a GD/landscaping firm. Eventually, I would like to start my own business once I feel competent enough to do so."

Students from both campuses get the opportunity to work on real life client projects during their studies as well as trips to famous gardens, specialist conferences and the chance to enter national competitions with their peers, all adding to the overall experience of their time with Scotland's Rural College.

sruc.ac.uk/horticulture
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(2 days a week (Wed & Thu), 10.30am–3.15pm, plus 2 days homework)

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Wednesday & Thursday 21/22 April & 5/6 May 2021

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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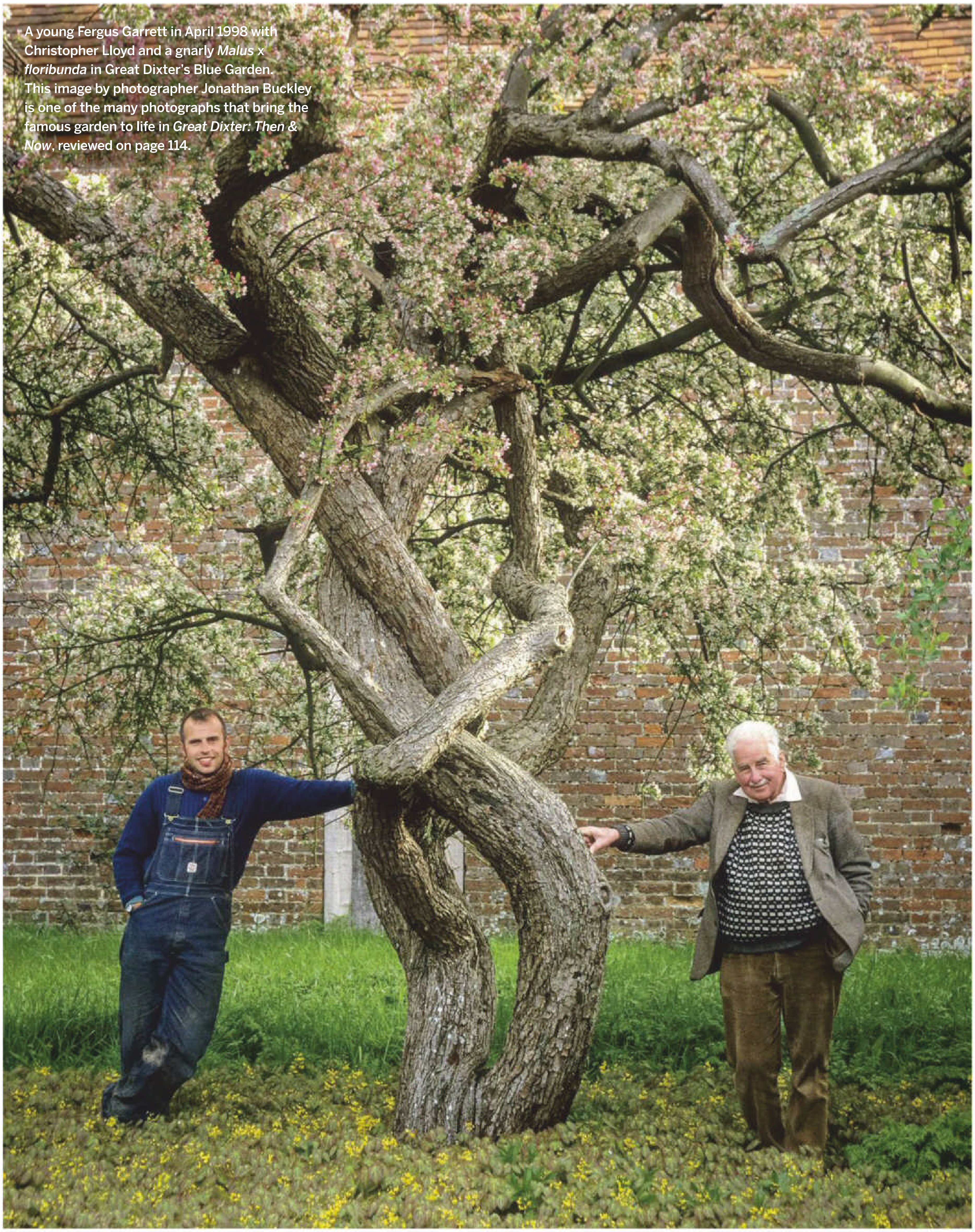
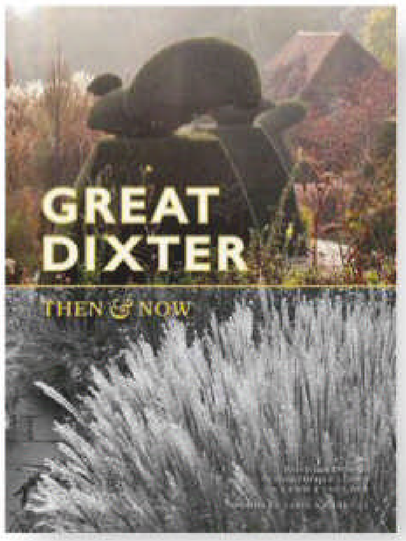


A young Fergus Garrett in April 1998 with Christopher Lloyd and a gnarly *Malus* x *floribunda* in Great Dixter's Blue Garden. This image by photographer Jonathan Buckley is one of the many photographs that bring the famous garden to life in *Great Dixter: Then & Now*, reviewed on page 114.

JONATHAN BUCKLEY



GREAT DIXTER: THEN & NOW

by Fergus Garrett,
photographs by Christopher Lloyd
and Carol Casselden

Pimpernel Press, £12.99
ISBN 978-1910258897

A series of snapshots that build into a pointillist portrait of Dixter capturing its enduring ethos as much as its shifting physical reality.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

Great Dixter is unquestionably one of the great gardens of the world. Unruffled by the winds of horticultural fashion, it epitomises a maximalist 'more is more' style that began with Christopher Lloyd, whose parents commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to lay out the garden in 1910, and continues today under the direction of Fergus Garrett, Christo's head gardener and now chief executive of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust.

Both men shared a passion for the craft of gardening and an iconoclastic aversion to polite 'good' taste, and many books have been written – by them and others – on the fruits of their labours, but Dixter enthusiasts will happily make space on their shelves for this latest addition to the oeuvre.

Great Dixter: Then & Now combines a smattering of early black and white pictures – Nathaniel Lloyd standing in the bare bones of his new garden, the small yew trees that would grow into Dixter's peacock topiaries, a tousle-haired young Christopher helping his mother plant native orchids in the Front Meadow – with a selection of Christopher's own photographic records of his life's work in progress, and pictures taken by photographer Carol Casselden starting in 2006, just before Christo died.

These pictures, supported by a authoritative commentary from Fergus, combine to create a fascinating record of how Dixter has been shaped and enriched over the years. Every area of the garden gets its moment in the spotlight, including a wonderful section charting development of the Barn and Sunk Gardens from the lawn left by Lutyens, through its excavation and first formal planting as directed by Nathaniel Lloyd, to its present bucolic iteration, and the transformation of the old Rose Garden into an Exotic Garden, which so scandalised traditionalists that it made the newspapers in the 1990s.

Like the garden it celebrates, this is a multi-layered, diverse display of delights.

GROUNDED
A Gardener's Journey to Abundance & Self-Sufficiency
LIZ ZORAB

GROUNDED: A GARDENER'S JOURNEY TO ABUNDANCE & SELF SUFFICIENCY

by Liz Zorab

Permanent Publications, £16
ISBN 978-1856233026

This engaging account of the creation of Byther Farm in Somerset is a useful guide to exploring the world of green living and permaculture.

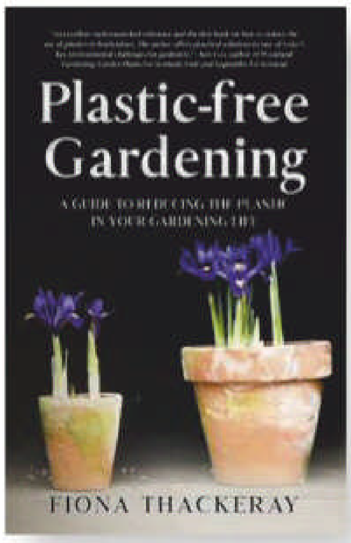
Reviewer Lia Leendertz is a garden writer.

Grounded charts the story of Byther Farm, Liz Zorab and her husband's smallholding, or homestead – a word that she uses deliberately because she loves it for its cosy, homely associations – in the north Somerset countryside. It is the tale of a successful experiment, an example of small-scale self-sufficiency and how it can be achieved in the UK, created with the surrounding countryside and the wider ecological impact in mind. The story is lent a great deal of pathos as Liz was suffering from a newly diagnosed illness and struggling with much fatigue and pain at the time she and her husband first found and began work on the farm. The book is part a lesson in 'how to', and part a personal testimony of the way in which her health problems and her ambitions for the farm have intertwined.

While this works very well as a permaculture instruction manual, it is given extra interest by holding Byther Farm throughout as its example, and we learn how Liz and her husband propagated and planted hedges for windbreaks, started keeping livestock, began planting, and about harvest and storage, all with reference to how it was done – starting absolutely from scratch and with a very limited budget – on their own site.

Throughout are included snippets, which give Liz's own personal take on the events unfolding and on the development of the farm, and there are a great many photographs throughout that show the development from bare field to richly productive planting, including a food forest and no-dig gardening beds. There is nothing here that wouldn't apply to a much smaller scale, making it a very helpful way in for anyone interested in growing food guided by permaculture principles. A heart-warming, personal, highly informative and useful guide.

BOOK REVIEWS



PLASTIC-FREE GARDENING: A GUIDE TO REDUCING THE PLASTIC IN YOUR GARDENING LIFE

by Fiona Thackeray

Trellis Books, £11.99
ISBN 978-1916491908

Here's a deep delve to what to recycle, what to stop using and how to replace the plastic in your garden, including some low-cost and DIY ideas.

Reviewer Alys Fowler is a garden writer and horticulturist.

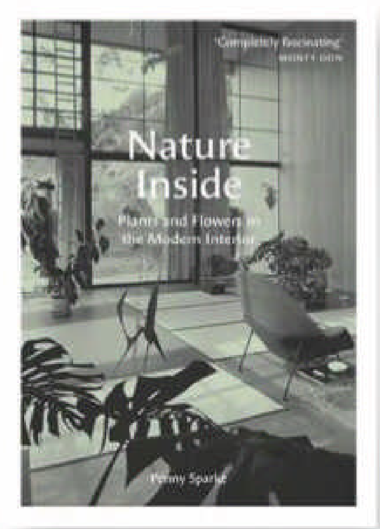
In essence it seems like the title says it all: rid your garden practises of plastic for a better planet. One might wonder, therefore, if it requires 99 pages to do so? However, even a cursory glance reveals a much more nuanced approach than just stop using plastic pots.

Plastic's early introduction in the 1800s was born, in part, out of a need to find another material that could divert the mass culling of wildlife that was being used to make everything from buttons to billiards ball out of turtle shells and the horns of various species.

From such a humble intention plastic has taken over our world – floating around in our seas, water systems and soils. Rallied to do better, Thackeray takes us on a very detailed tour of a garden and all the plastic it houses, from the ubiquitous plastic pots to the hidden plastics in seed packaging or in your clothing choices, to why 'compostable' plastic films aren't always what they seem (they can use accelerants to help break them down that have questionable environmental credentials).

Some alternatives to plastic are going to be harder to give up than others. Recycling old net curtains into a fleece substitute is commendable, but perhaps only suitable for smaller gardens. The pros and cons of the many plastics used in protected cropping are weighed up carefully against buying in imported foods. Like so many environmental choices the terrain is contested in so many different ways so that hard-and-fast rules just can't apply, but this book will pick a path through the debate and offer up novel and interesting solutions.

I certainly learned about many new materials, including cow pots from cow dung to Eco Grid, a 100 per cent recycled plastic ground stabilisation for grass areas. The book itself is entirely plastic free (most book covers contain plastic), and the money from the sale of is goes to support Trellis a therapeutic gardening charity, which makes this a book of good intentions from start to finish.



NATURE INSIDE: PLANTS AND FLOWERS IN THE MODERN INTERIOR

by Penny Sparke

Yale Books, £40
ISBN 978-0300244021

Plants and flowers are often sidelined when examining the history of modern interiors, here, their significance is brought to the fore.

Reviewer Katie Dutton is editorial assistant for Gardens Illustrated.

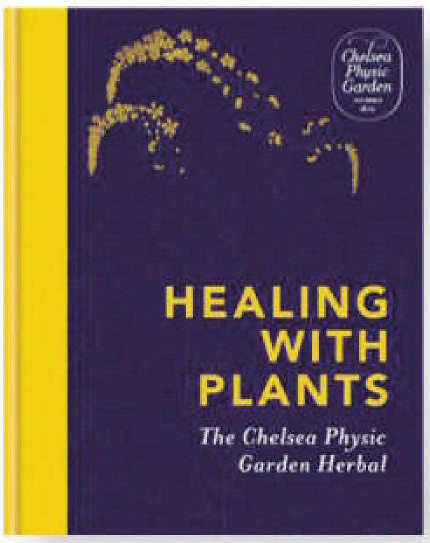
The plants we choose to bring indoors have represented an array of cultural and social factors throughout history; from a symbol of colonial power to a sign of feminine Victorian domesticity, and most recently, have become a reminder of the environmental crisis. In her new book, author Penny Sparke, professor of design history at Kingston University London traces the close relationship between design and nature throughout the past 200 years, in both public and private spaces – from 19th-century greenhouses to modern-day shopping malls.

Colonialism has a huge part to play in the history of nature indoors. Tropical plants brought to the UK from the colonies had to be housed inside glasshouses to keep them alive. One of the first examples of such a glasshouse was at the Chelsea Physic Garden in 1680. These plants were for scientific and medical purposes, but with the popularity of conservatories in the Victorian era, plants found themselves creeping from glasshouse to parlour, becoming rooted centre-stage in the heart of the domestic sphere.

Where the Victorians quite literally brought nature in, the Modernist movement in the early 20th-century saw houses built to adapt to the natural landscape. Houses were built around trees, and gardens became 'outside rooms' rather than classed as a separate space.

Commercial spaces, such as shopping malls from the 1980s onwards also saw the inclusion of foliage, and Sparke notes the uncomfortable truth of plants in these spaces being tools to cover 'rampant commercialism'. There are interesting points about the link between femininity and plants also; for example, she highlights a correlation between the rise in women entering the workplace in the 1960s and 1970s, alongside a rise in plants and flowers on display in offices.

Although the book is academic in nature with each chapter packed with information, sources and quotes, it is also highly accessible and a thoroughly good read.



HEALING WITH PLANTS: THE CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN HERBAL

by Holly Farrell

Aster, £25
ISBN 978-1783253043

An educational and inspiring guide to the medicinal properties of some of the more common garden and hedgerow plants.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer.

If there were a modern-day herbal to have in your library, it would be this one by gardening author Holly Farrell in collaboration with the Chelsea Physic Garden in London, where medicinal plants have been grown since the 17th century. Indeed, one of the most notable herbals in history – Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal* – was produced in the early 18th century with support of Chelsea Physic Garden. Blackwell illustrated the book using specimens growing there.

While modern medicine has overtaken herbalism today, many still look to the plant world as their medicine cabinet and around 40 per cent of drugs are still plant-based. Farrell's book is ultimately a traditional herbal, listing profiles on 130 plants with notes on identification and uses. But it is also an inspiring and interesting read, as she tells the story of the origins of the physic garden and the use of plants in the history of healing, briefly touching on how herbs are used today in such traditions as Ayurveda.

Farrell also provides ideas for designing a healing herb garden using such plants as angelica, meadowsweet and camomile – all good for digestion – considering conditions and soil types for growing.

In what she says is an introduction to the subject of herbalism, Farrell gives remedies for tisanes, tinctures, syrups and more that can boost mood, calm frayed nerves and aid concentration. She covers the digestive system, aches and pains, women's health, children's health, skin and hair. Bilberry jam can boost the immune system; a honeysuckle infusion can relieve sore throats and cool hot flushes.

In each plant profile, Farrell lists botanical and common names, followed by paragraphs on cultivation, history of healing, harvesting, growing and how to use. Her words are accompanied by Ella Mclean's beautiful colour illustrations, which make it feel in tune with the herbals of old – particularly Elizabeth Blackwell's magnificent work.

SOME SNOWDROPS: A PHOTOGRAPHIC RAMBLE

by Anne C Repnow

Davidia Press, £25
ISBN 978-3982244600

Well-informed, elegantly sufficient and charming, this book showcases snowdrops in the garden and is ideal for anyone who is building a collection.

Reviewer Naomi Slade is a gardening writer, author and designer.

Beautiful, elegant and diverse, snowdrops have a unique and addictive appeal and it is this, together with a little judiciously applied peer-pressure from the galanthophile community, that inspired Anne C Repnow to write her distinctive new book.

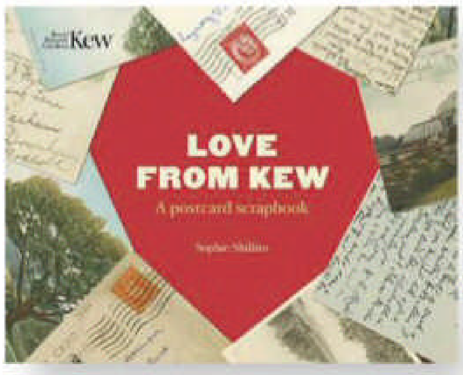
Intentionally echoing the classic title *Some Flowers* by Vita Sackville-West, *Some Snowdrops* oozes competence and confidence. It is a personal view and selection – Repnow makes no bones about that – but its anchors are firm, both in her background as moderator of the German Facebook group Galanthusfreunde and organiser of the German snowdrop event Schneeglöckchen in Mannheim's Luisenpark.

Following a selection of pleasingly photographed snowdrop gardens and a short background discourse, are profiles of 90 different cultivars each with three pictures of the plant in a garden setting and in different stages of bloom; a style consistent with the quiet detail for which snowdrops are esteemed. Alongside this is a description of plant, habit, origin and foibles, with anecdotes that introduce sundry passionate, whimsical, eagle-eyed human protagonists.

Repnow's treatment of blooming time, cost and vigour is neat, using a simple sliding scale from early to late, and a number of coins or flowers to indicate proportional cost and ease of cultivation. A high-level approach that elegantly avoids getting tangled up in over-precision. The author's German base and perspective, meanwhile, allows her to include cultivars that may be new to the casual British snowdrop fancier.

This is a book that stands out for its accessibility and warmth. While beautiful, it does not aspire to be fine art or academia: it is real plants growing in real gardens, presented with lightly worn expertise. Whether dipped into to compile a wish-list, or read from cover to cover, *Some Snowdrops* is a useful and interesting addition to the literature on the subject.

BOOK REVIEWS



LOVE FROM KEW: A POSTCARD SCRAPBOOK
by Sophie Shillito

Kew Publishing, £15
ISBN 978-1842467329

A glimpse into the history of Kew Gardens and the lives and loves of visitors as revealed through the handwritten personality of a postcard.

Reviewer Sorrel Everton is deputy editor of Gardens Illustrated.

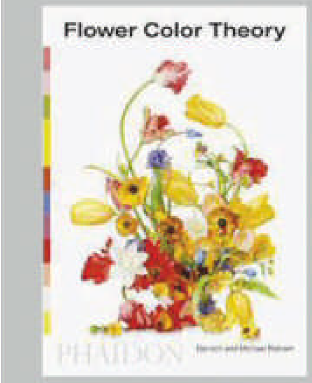
How many of us still send postcards from our day trip and holiday destinations? Or is it perhaps a quick selfie and online message to update friends and family of our whereabouts? The postcard has just celebrated its 150th anniversary. Launched in 1870, the delight in sending a short, quickly jotted-down message on a postcard quickly gained popularity, peaking in 1913-1914 when 926 million cards were sent. Here was a quick, cheap and easy way to say hello and keep in touch.

And it is the social history of postcards that became the means to author Sophie Shillito uncovering more about The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and their relationship to the people who have visited the gardens over the years. In this little book to browse, Shillito collates a selection of postcards, all of Kew Gardens gathered from different eras. They allow us a glimpse of the gardens' past – how fashions in planting have changed, how iconic vistas have matured, what indeed were considered the picture postcard highlights of the day. But it is the hand-written messages on the postcards that tell of people's connection to the gardens – and reveal intriguing, often mundane, snippets of their personal lives – 'the window cleaners came this morning', reports one writer, another a reminder to arrive by noon and to 'bring some tomatoes and some baby royal', another the reassurance that 'Mother is getting along nicely now'. Here are people going about their lives, all of whom have shared a visit to Kew to enjoy the open space, the fresh air, appreciate the seasonal floral displays – and quite often comment on the weather.

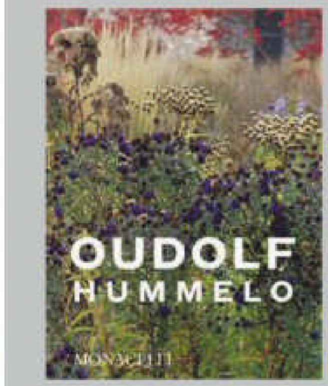
Shillito adds in details of Kew's history as well as some imaginings sparked by the pictures themselves to give us a book that is both charming in its simplicity and a reminder of the key role green spaces – and our access to them – can play in our daily life.

Other books

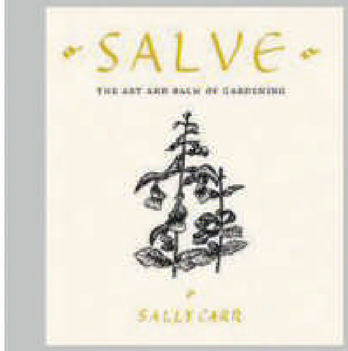
Unwind with some garden-themed poetry, or take a dive into the history of landscape gardens.



FLOWER COLOR THEORY
by Darroch Putnam and Michael Putnam, Phaidon, £24.95, ISBN 978-1838661571
An inspirational and practical guide to creating floral bouquets using specific colour schemes. With over 175 arrangements to suit a range of styles and flower species.



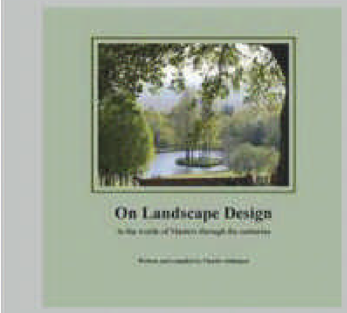
HUMMELO
by Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury, Monacelli Press, £32, ISBN 978-1580935708
This reprint tells the story of renowned Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf's own personal garden, with contributions from friend and designer Noel Kingsbury.



SALVE: THE ART AND BALM OF GARDENING
by Sally Carr, Troubador Publishing, £19.99, ISBN 978-1800460898
A lyrical, soothing book about the joy of nature, gardening and poetry. Poems are accompanied by illustrations by Rosamund Ulph.

STRIKING
SUCCULENT
GARDENS

STRIKING SUCCULENT GARDENS
by Gabriel Frank, Ten Speed Press, £14.99, ISBN 978-0399580987
Full of practical ideas, step-by-step instructions, and basic plant care, this is for anyone wanting to experiment more with larger, statement succulents outside.



ON LANDSCAPE DESIGN
by Charles Aldington, Intramuros Books, £45, ISBN 978-1527263291
Using the words of great garden practitioners over the centuries, this book explores the origins of landscape gardens; how and why they were made, as well as their influence across the globe.

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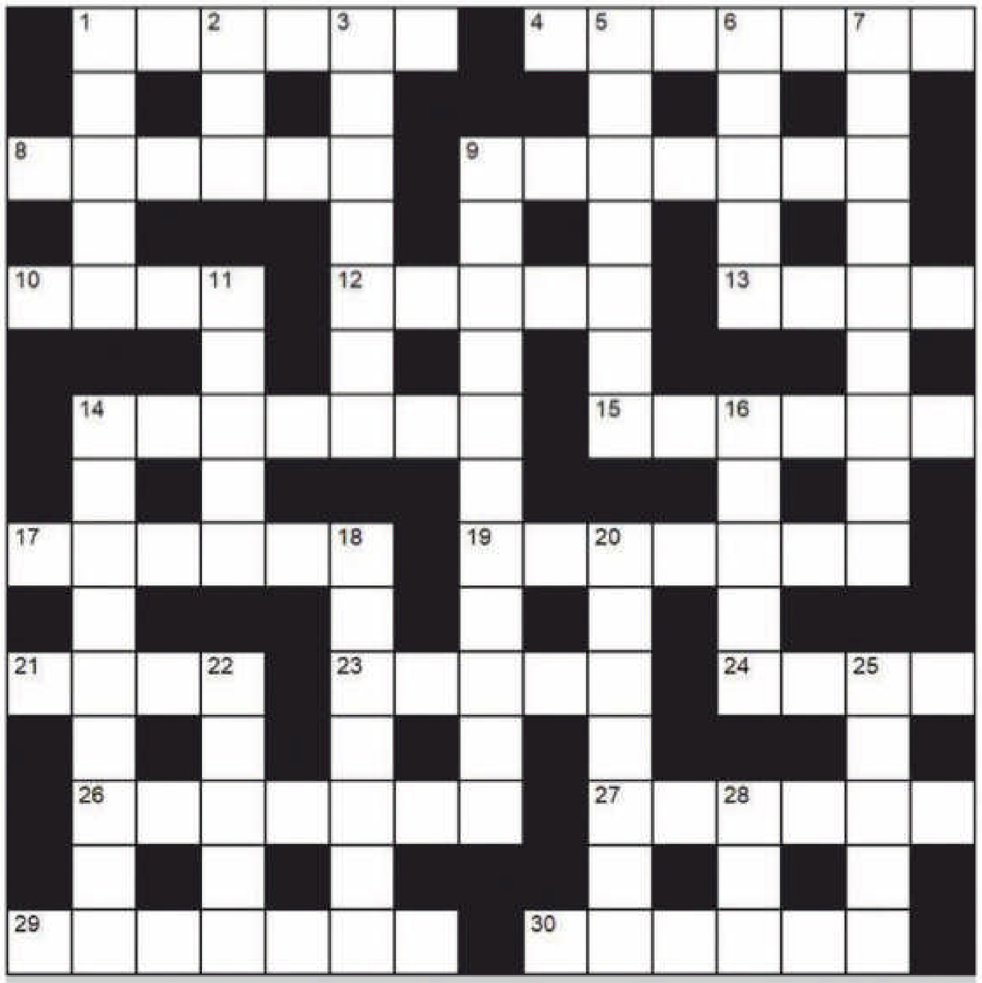
Crossword



ACROSS

1 See 28 down
4 What a weak-stemmed plant did? Flower, initially, cut off (7)
8 Genus of the 'Abyssinian Banana' – seen in immense terrace (6)
9 Variety of dwarf peach tree, ideal for containers – a windfall! (7)
10 *Agapanthus* with tubular blue flowers named after stretch of the Thames at Oxford (4)
12 An orange-berried holly – 'Traffic Light' (5)
13 Photo of an antirrhinum? (4)
14 *Prunus* species of morello cherries – causes change, right inside (7)
15 A compact mophead hydrangea cultivar – a bit special to name! (6)
17 See 25 down
19 Surface-spreading roots (7)
21 Bulbous underground stem of eg freesia (4)
23 Remove water – start of day, before wet weather! (5)
24 As a flower bears fruit (4)
26 A magnolia with bowl-shaped cream flowers – and Devon resort (7)
27 *Baptisia australis* is commonly called 'False ___', part of tamarind I got (6)
29 A small type of winter pumpkin – initially, Kew assists botanists on cultivating honeydew, also (7)
30 An F1 carrot with large, cylindrical roots – and Gwynedd resort (6)

DOWN

1 A large-flowered *Cornus* cultivar – 'Goddess of Love'? (5)
2 Honour awarded Roy Lancaster in 1999 for services to horticulture (3)
3 A cultivar name meaning graceful – 'Senegal' perhaps (7)
5 Genus of toadflax plant resembling snapdragon (7)
6 Longs… for conifer trees with clusters of needles (5)
7 Angela, Sue cultivated the genus of oleaster (9)
9 Common name for *Gypsophila paniculata* (5,6)
11 Half of a red summer fruit provides mulch material (5)
14 Genus of the confetti bush … a mole once spoilt (9)
16 Elders, say, found in an arboretum? (5)
18 A white-flowering skimmia and Cornish town (7)
20 Evergreen of *Berberis* family with bamboo-like foliage – found in Spain and in Austria (7)
22 An anemone type dahlia with mauve-pink blooms – 'Latin Dance' (5)
25/17 across Common name of *Tigridia pavonia* – grow fertile, anyhow (5,6)
28/1 across Scentless blue wildflower – excited, I vote 'Gold'! (3,6)

- **Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the March issue**

SOLUTIONS TO THE JANUARY ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

Across 7 Stock **8** Perovskia **9** Lei **10** Apple **11** Label **12** Diascia **14** Spiraea **16** Violets **17** Freesia **19** Roscoea **22** Restios **24** Nymph **26** Spine **28** Koi **29** Cordyline **30** Nanus.
Down 1 Solidago **2** Okra **3** Ardens **4** Oval **5** Akebia **6** Macleaya **7** Salad **8** Poplars **13** Credo **15** Iteas **16** Veronica **17** Fertile **18** Stinking **20** Samara **21** Austin **23** Slips **25** Hoya **27** Etna.

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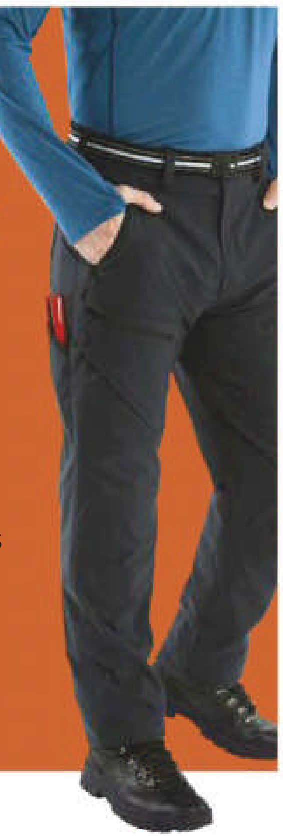

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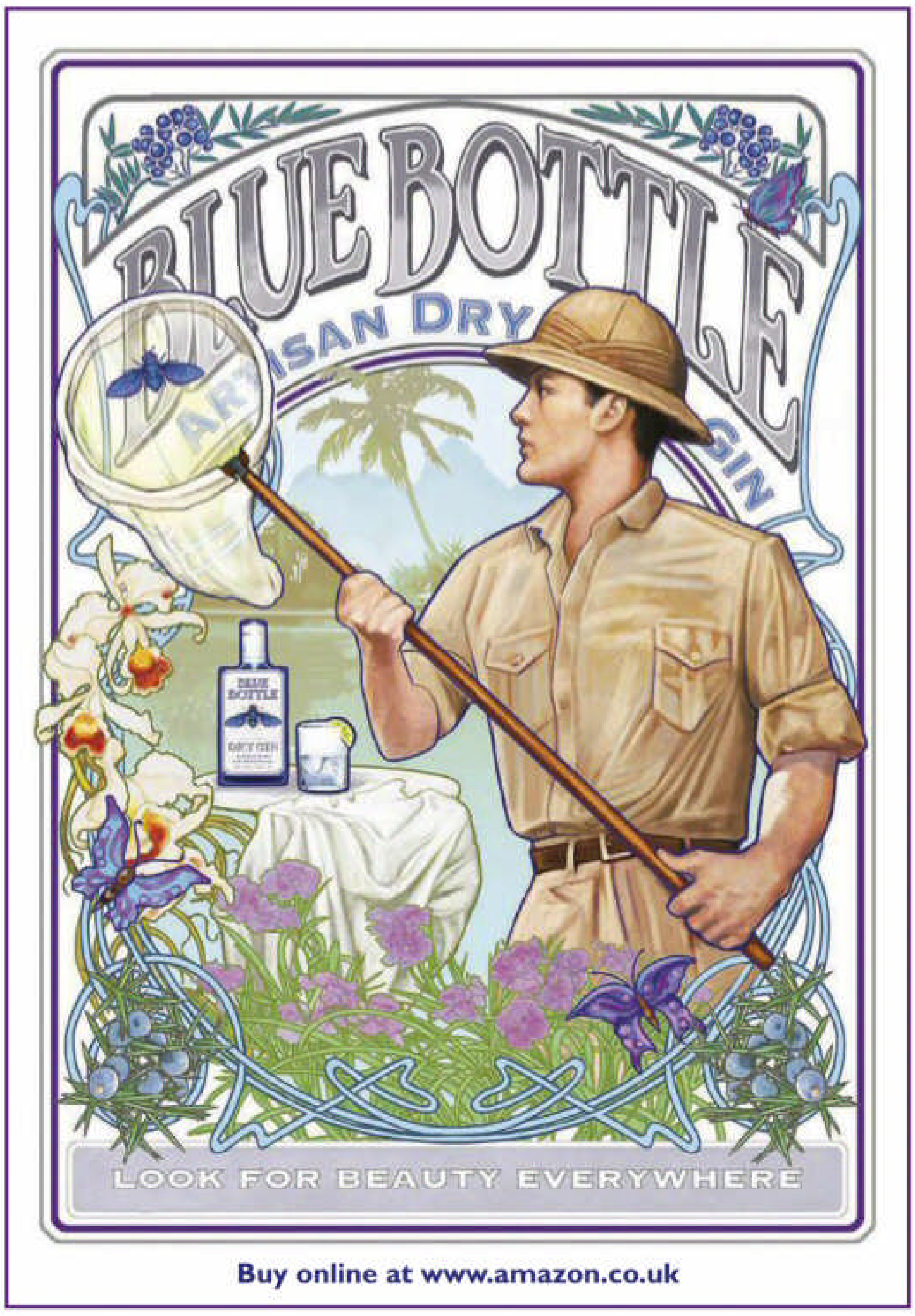
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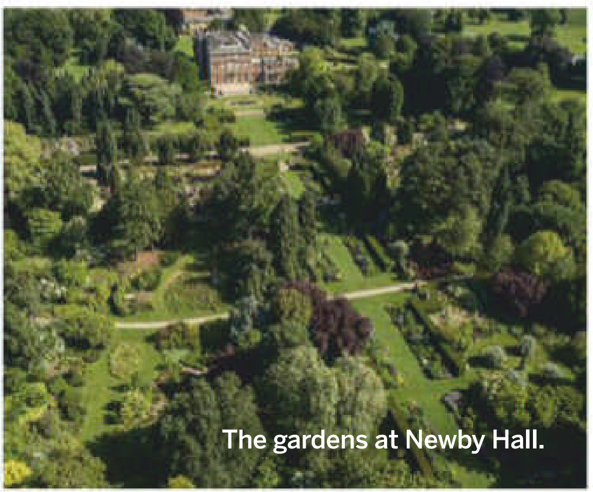
The gardens at Newby Hall.

The Royal Suite at Goldsborough Hall.

We are delighted to offer you the chance to win a luxurious two-night stay for two at five-star Goldsborough Hall, plus our prize includes tickets to award-winning Newby Hall & Gardens in nearby Ripon*.

Goldsborough Hall is a hidden gem of a Grade II-listed 17th-century mansion, having played a key role in the history of Knaresborough, including as home to the Queen's aunt, Princess Mary, throughout the 1920s. It is now one of the most private, exclusive and beautiful places to stay in Yorkshire, overlooking historic gardens and tranquil parkland and with fine dining in a three AA-rosette restaurant.

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Your stay will be complemented by a visit to the award-winning gardens of Newby Hall, where the layout as a series of rooms has been fine-tuned over the generations and now displays innovative and exciting planting alongside the historic and beautifully matured gardens. Find out more about the gardens at newbyhall.com

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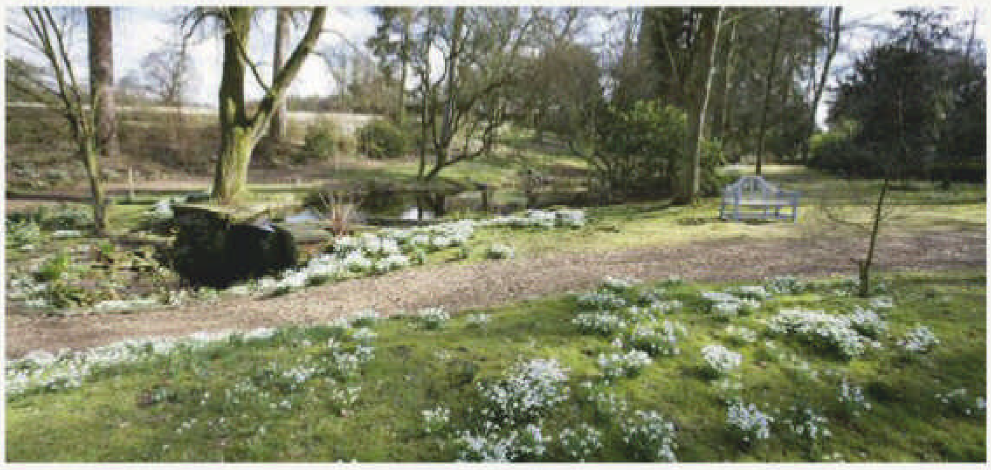
Spectacular snowdrops

Make time in the new year to visit this collection of stunning gardens



1 RODE HALL AND GARDENS

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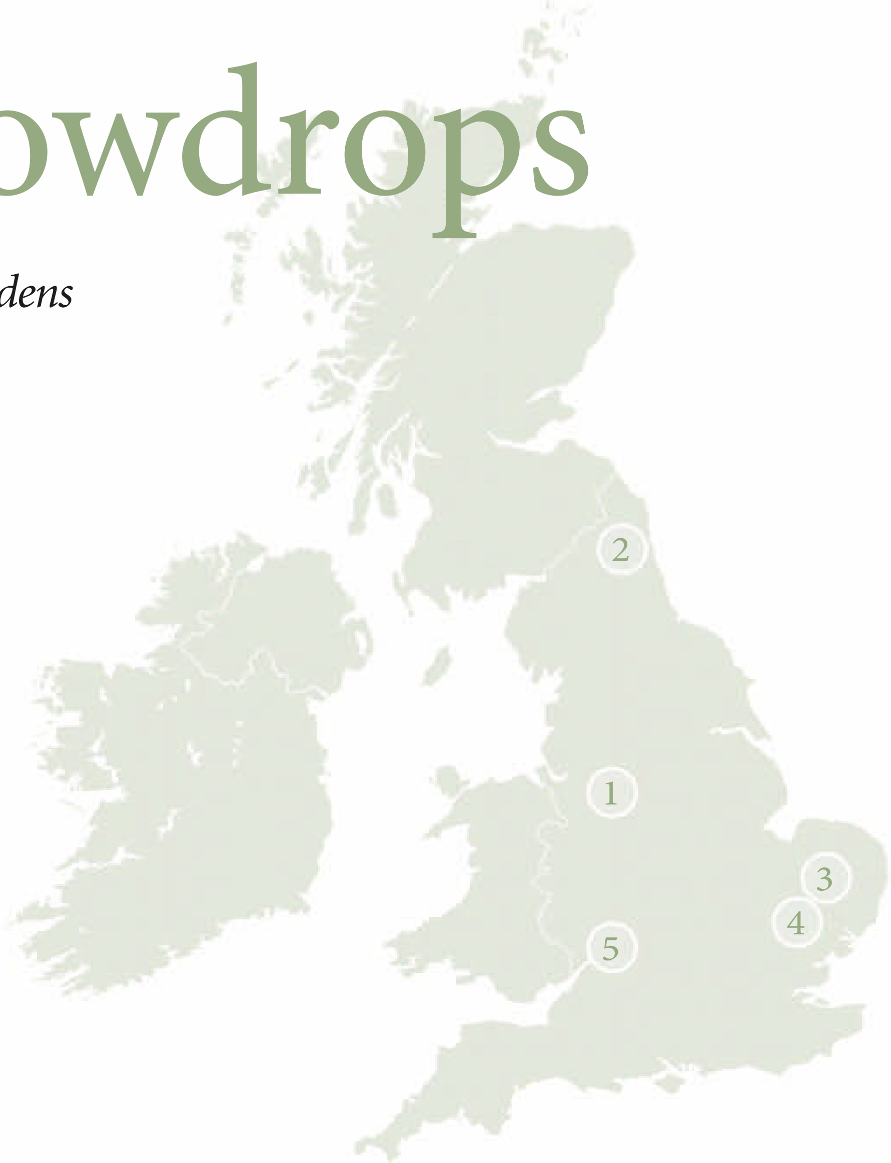
Church Lane, Scholar Green ST7 3QP | 01270 873237 | rodehall.co.uk



2 WALLINGTON – NATIONAL TRUST

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Cambo, Northumberland NE61 4AR | nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington

3 CHIPPENHAM PARK

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Chippenham, Ely, Cambs CB7 5PT | 01638 721416 | chippenhamparkgardens.co.uk

4 HEDINGHAM CASTLE

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Halstead, Essex CO9 3DJ | 01787 460261 | hedinghamcastle.co.uk

5 PAINSWICK ROCOCO GARDEN

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Painswick, Stroud GL6 6TH | 01452 813204 | rococogarden.org.uk

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Get inspired for the spring season with the best plant and bulb suppliers

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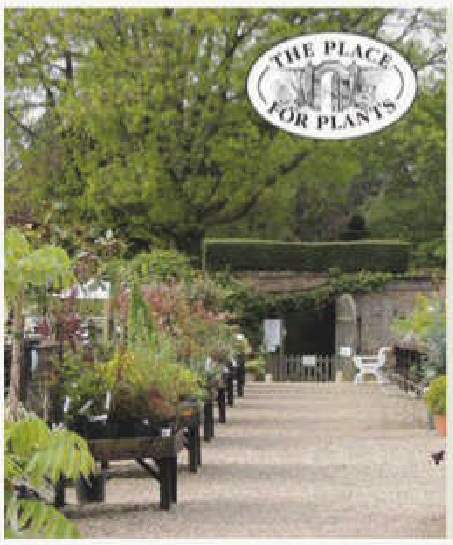

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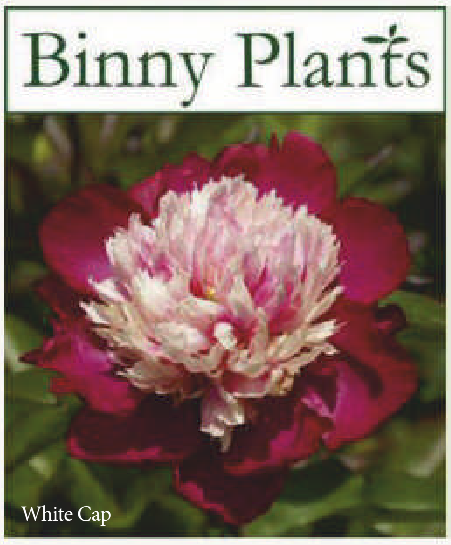

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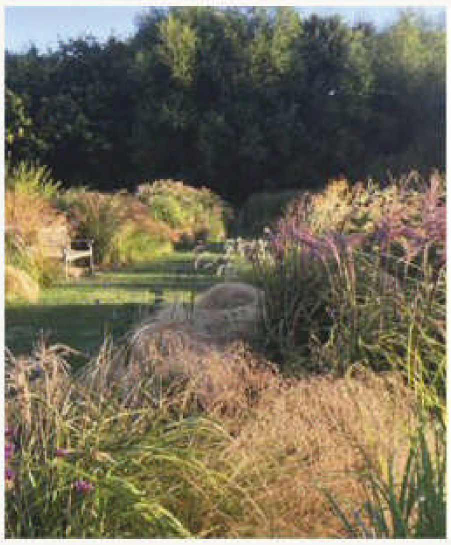

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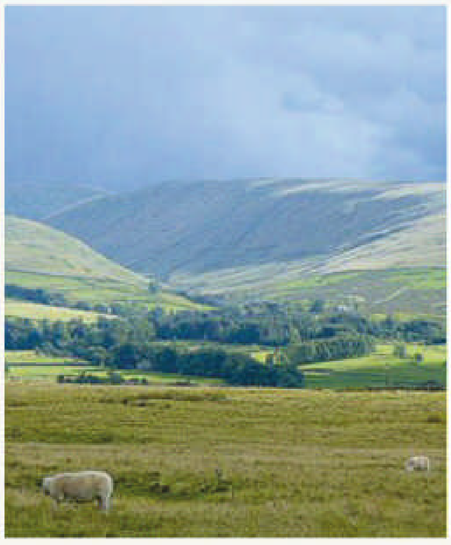

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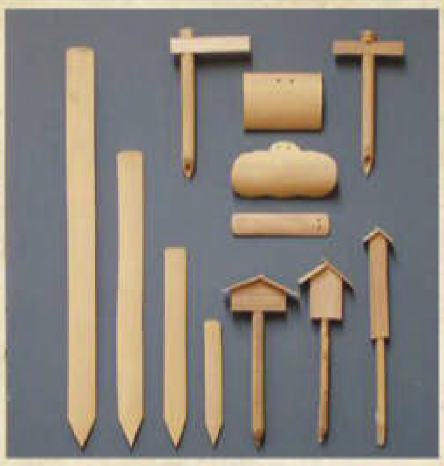

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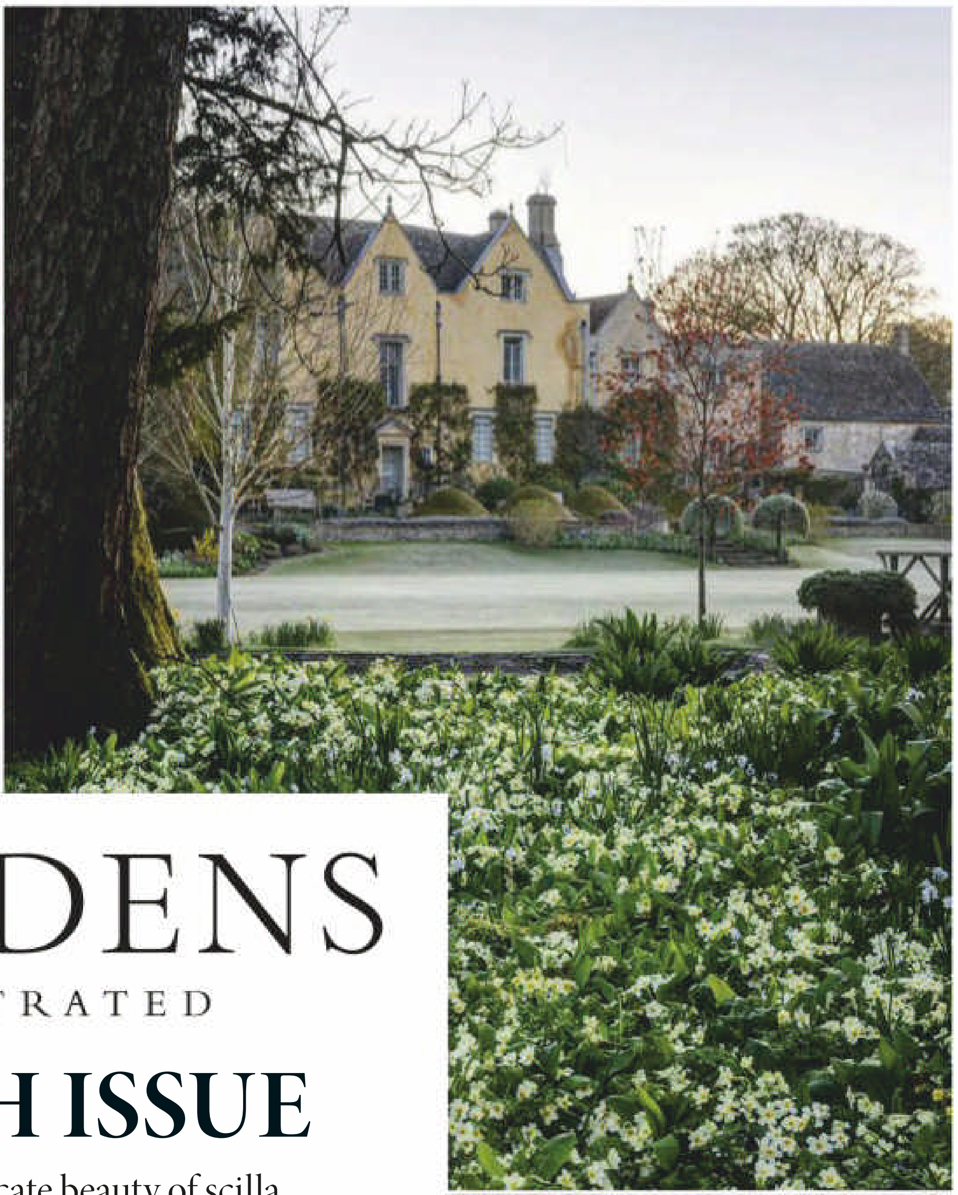
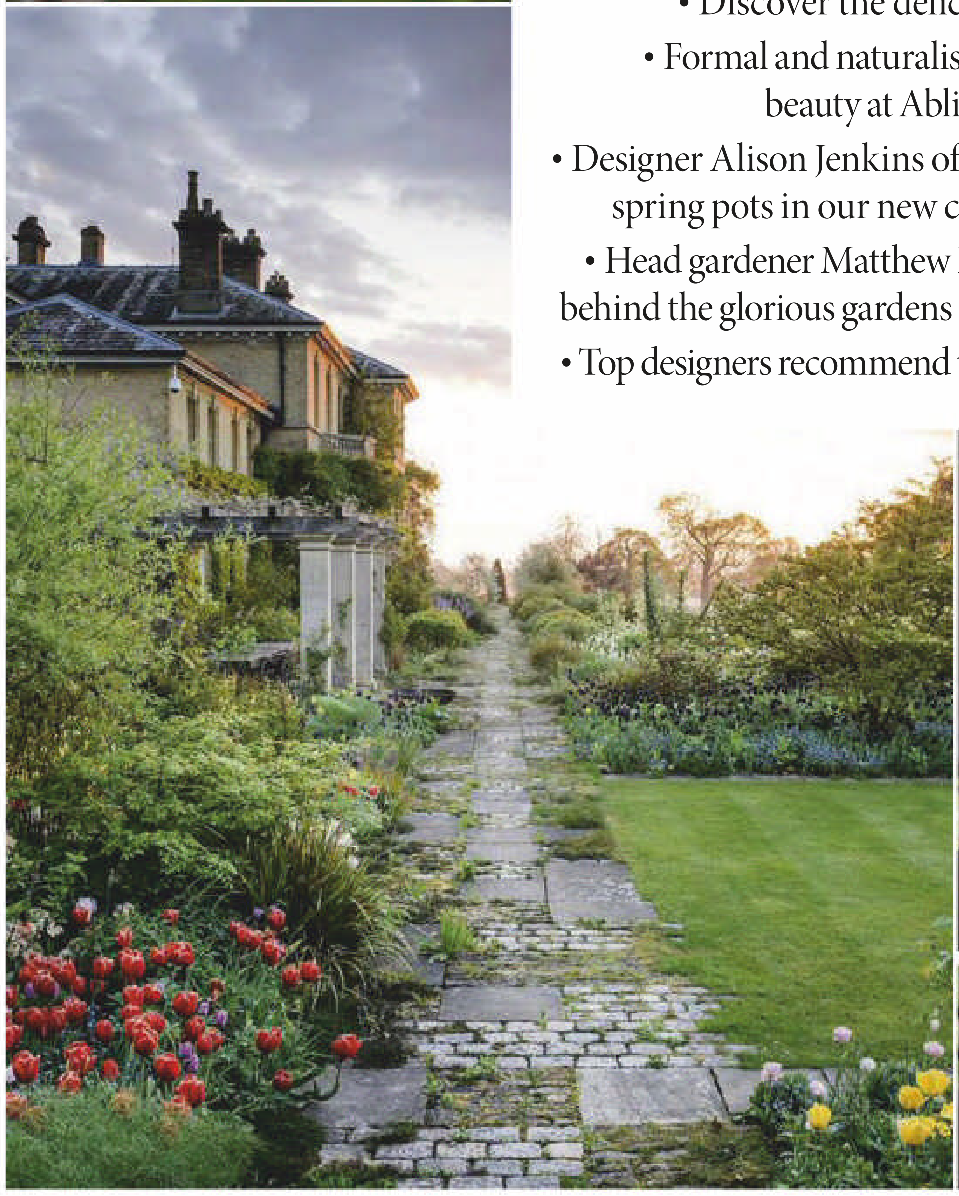


GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED

MARCH ISSUE

- Discover the delicate beauty of scilla
- Formal and naturalised mix in the timeless beauty at Ablington Manor
- Designer Alison Jenkins offers inspiration for fabulous spring pots in our new container planting series
- Head gardener Matthew Reese reveals of the secrets behind the glorious gardens of Malverleys in Hampshire
- Top designers recommend their must-have seeds to sow



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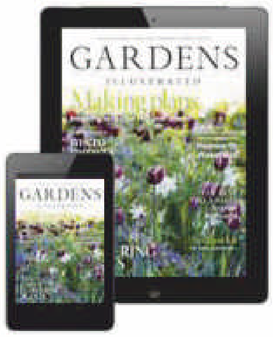

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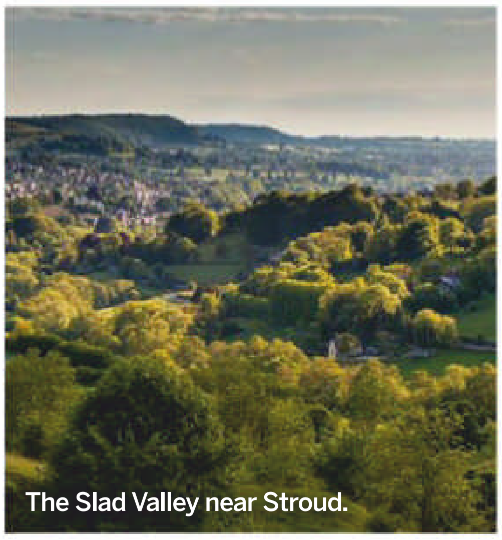
How to spend a gardener's weekend in…

Stroud

The Cotswold town has a lively weekend Farmers' Market and offers plenty of beautiful walks, but in February it is the snowdrops that make it a magnet for gardeners


The Slad Valley near Stroud.

If the Cotswolds were a frame of mind, then Stroud would be quite separate – even though the Five Valleys that converge on the town are just as pretty as the more famous honeypots beyond Cirencester. Built on wool manufacture, rather than sheep farming, the industrial edge is what sets the town and its villages apart, as well as the slightly challenging, steep terrain.

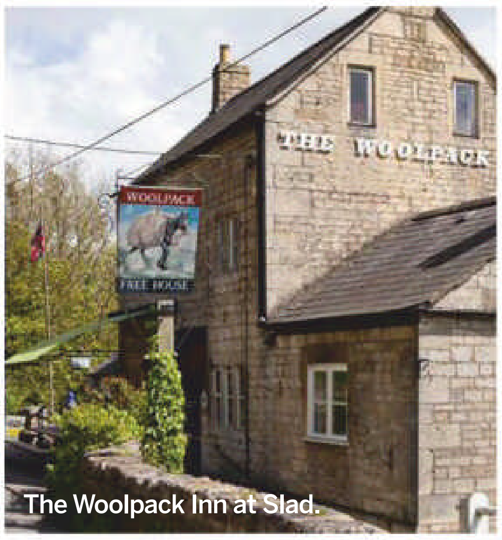
Stroud Farmers' Market.

Market value

Before doing anything on a weekend in, or near, Stroud, head to the Farmers' Market in the centre of town on Saturday morning (open 9am-2pm). It is justly celebrated, bringing together producers from within a 25-mile radius. Highlights include **Salt Bakehouse** for sourdough bread and **Jonathan Crump's Cheese,** courtesy of rare-breed Gloucester cows. The market atmosphere spills into the older **Shambles Market** as well as **Five Valleys Market**, recently launched and taking London's Borough Market as its model.

Winter warmer

The train ride between Kemble and Stroud on the London Paddington line is famously beautiful. At journey's end, you could do worse than to stay in **Rodborough**, uphill from Stroud, with a National Trust-maintained common even further up. When time is tight, however, rent a car for more spectacular walks within easy reach. To the west, the **Cotswold Way** connects Chipping Campden with Bath in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the country's largest). There are many walks to be plotted, taking in villages that feature warming pubs; one of the best is **The Woolpack** at Slad. Besides its pedigree as writer Laurie Lee's former local, it has just the right ambience, ale and food, with views over the valley.Other pubs for walks include **The Rose and Crown** at Nympsfield and **The Crown** in delightful Minchinhampton, the sort of name and place that PG Wodehouse might have dreamed up, ditto Bisley (**The Bear**) and Frampton Mansell (**The Crown**).



The Woolpack Inn at Slad.

Snowdrop special

Gloucestershire is a galanthophile destination in February. First get your bearings in town with a look at **The Walled Garden**, a restoration project directed and curated by artist Cleo Mussi. A display of *Galanthus* 'S. Arnott' is in homage to local collector Herbert Ransom of the **Giant Snowdrop Company**, who worked to make snowdrops more readily available in the 1950s and 1960s. The spiritual home of *Galanthus* 'Atkinsii' is a short drive away, spread over the pleasure grounds of **Painswick Rococo Garden**. An afternoon on one's knees could be rounded off very nicely by high tea at **The Painswick**. The species *Galanthus elwesii* belongs to **Colesbourne Park,** part of a collection teased back to life by the current owners, Sir Henry and Lady Elwes, with at least 250 other varieties along formal walks, with church bells, tea and cakes. On the way back, there is **Cotswold Farm**, near Duntisbourne Abbots, a quintessential Arts and Crafts remodel of a 17th-century farm, with drifts of snowdrops in the woods, and bulbs for sale.

Exit through the gift shop

Collectors of irises may like to know that Anne Milner's **National Collection of Arthur Bliss Irises** is near Cirencester. For the highly unusual, personally gathered and international, the great **Pan-Global Plants** opens its gates next to the manor at Frampton-on-Severn. The lovely village, strung out along the common, is an added bonus. Gloucestershire has more than its fair share of good arboretums, with charming **Batsford** (a scenic drive of 31 miles) and the tree completist's **Westonbirt**, near Tetbury. In this princely town antique shopping is a cut above, with the best range at **Number 52 Antiques & Interiors**. Stop at the elegant **Lola & Co** deli, and see what HRH The Prince of Wales is up to at the **Highgrove Shop**.

Painswick Rococo Garden.

Souvenirs

Take-out lunch: Jolly Nice Farmshop; Falafel Mama.
Deli: Armadeli at Five Valleys Market in the town centre.
Groceries: William's, Nailsworth (good fish); Woodchester Valley Vineyard and Winery.
Pick-me-up: Stroud Brewery, riverside beer and kitchen. The café at Thistledown Farm.
Browse: Made in Stroud, quality handmade goods.

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Price from £1,386 per person for five nights including return accommodation with breakfast, one lunch, three dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Leader.

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Expert horticulturalist and popular Kirker tour leader Kirsty Fergusson will escort this highly anticipated new itinerary 'behind the scenes' of some of the most wonderful gardens in the south-west of England. Based in the picturesque small town of Bridport, close to Dorset's World Heritage Jurassic Coast, we will visit a fascinating range of public and private gardens, many of which will open specially for our visit – including Charles Dowding's kitchen garden, Forde Abbey, with its beautiful meadow gardens and Abbotsbury sub-tropical gardens.

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THE GARDENS OF WICKLOW

A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY | 5 JULY 2021

The past two or three decades have seen a new crop of bold and beautiful gardens maturing within the romantic landscape of southeast Ireland and this tour presents an exceptional opportunity to meet the plantsmen and women at the heart of this horticultural revolution. Highlights include Alfred Cochrane's Corke Lodge in Shankill, Powerscourt, Lamb Hill and Mount Usher. Our base for the duration is the 4* Brooklodge Hotel, located 30 minutes' drive from Wicklow.

Price from £1,682 per person (single supp. £178) for four nights including return flights to Dublin, accommodation with breakfast, four lunches, four dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Leader.

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